Digital Design & Computer Arch.

Lecture 2b: Mysteries in Comp. Arch.

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ETH Zürich

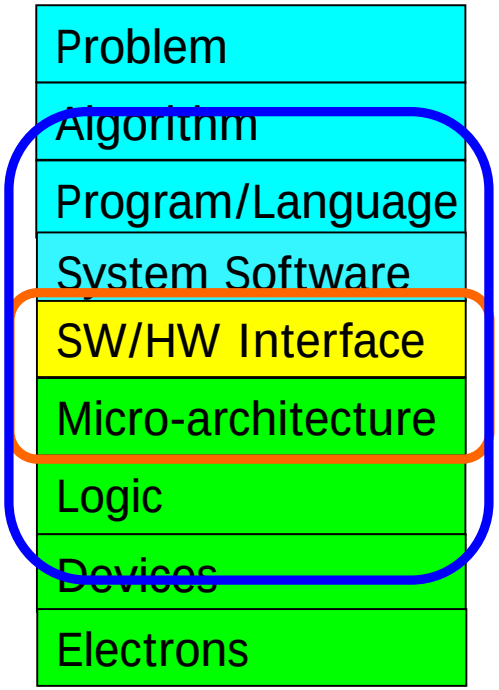
Spring 2020

21 February 2020

How Do Problems Get Solved by Electrons?

Recall: The Transformation Hierarchy

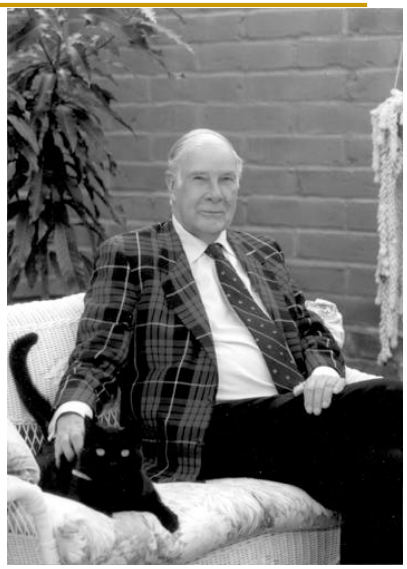
Computer Architecture (expanded view)



Computer Architecture (narrow view)

Levels of Transformation

"The purpose of computing is [to gain] insight" (*Richard Hamming*)
We gain and generate insight by solving problems
How do we ensure problems are solved by electrons?

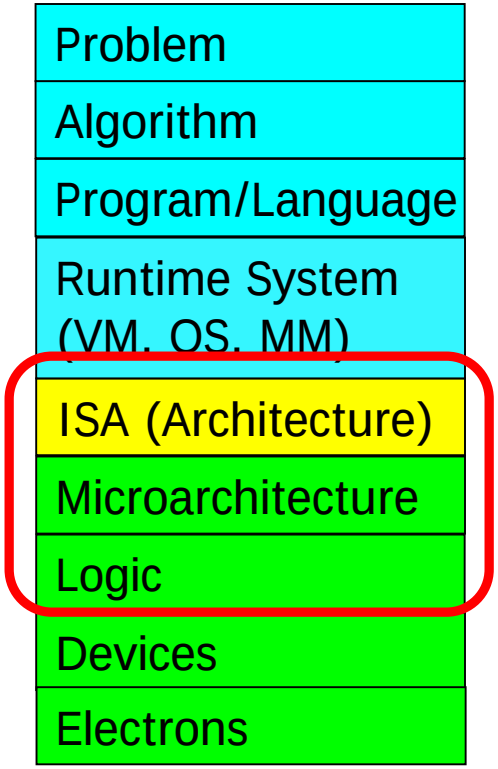


Algorithm

Step-by-step procedure that is **guaranteed to terminate** where **each step is precisely stated** and **can be carried out by a computer**

- **Finiteness**
- **Definiteness**
- **Effective computability**

Many algorithms for the same problem



ISA (Instruction Set Architecture)

Interface/contract between SW and HW.

What the programmer assumes hardware will satisfy.

Microarchitecture
An implementation of the ISA

Digital logic circuits
Building blocks of micro-arch (e.g., gates)

Aside: A Famous Work By Hamming

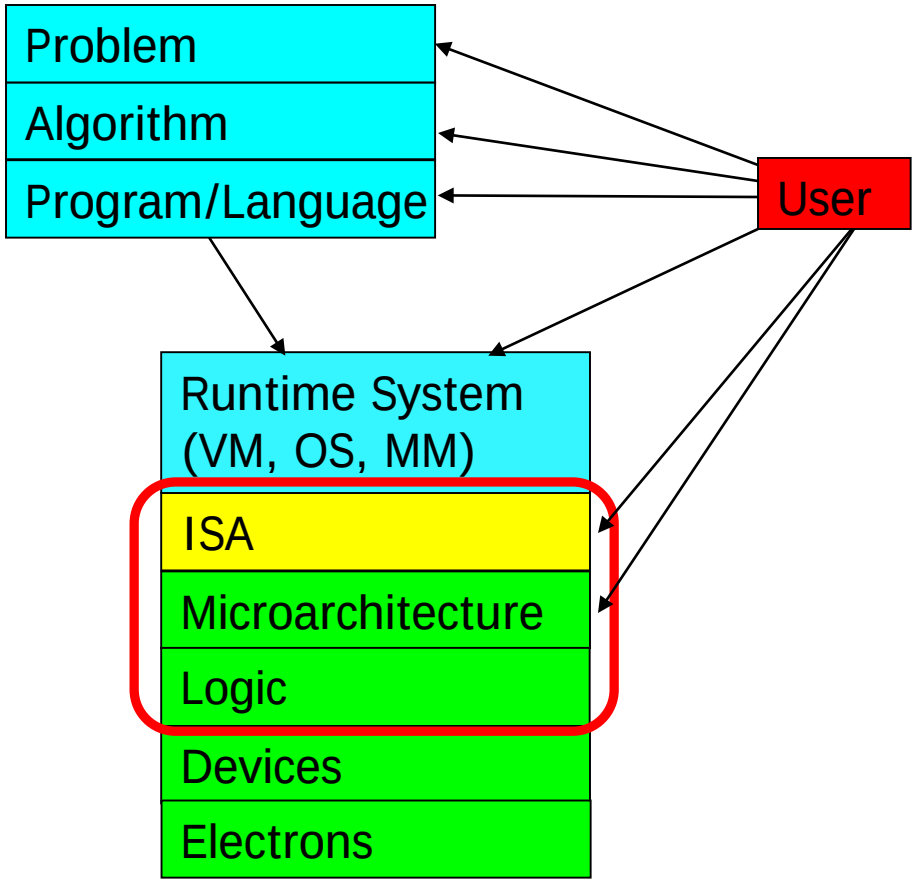
- Hamming, "Error Detecting and Error Correcting Codes," Bell System Technical Journal 1950.

- Introduced the concept of Hamming distance
  - number of locations in which the corresponding symbols of two equal-length strings is different
- Developed a theory of codes used for error detection and correction

- Also see:
  - Hamming, "You and Your Research," Talk at Bell Labs, 1986.
  - http://www.cs.virginia.edu/~robins/YouAndYourResearch.html

Levels of Transformation, Revisited

- A user-centric view: computer designed for users



- The entire stack should be optimized for user

The Power of Abstraction

- Levels of transformation create abstractions
  - Abstraction: A higher level only needs to know about the interface to the lower level, not how the lower level is implemented
  - E.g., high-level language programmer does not really need to know what the ISA is and how a computer executes instructions
- Abstraction improves productivity
  - No need to worry about decisions made in underlying levels
  - E.g., programming in Java vs. C vs. assembly vs. binary vs. by specifying control signals of each transistor every cycle
- Then, why would you want to know what goes on underneath or above?

Crossing the Abstraction Layers

- As long as everything goes well, not knowing what happens underneath (or above) is not a problem.
- What if
  - The program you wrote is running slow?
  - The program you wrote does not run correctly?
  - The program you wrote consumes too much energy?
  - Your system just shut down and you have no idea why?
  - Someone just compromised your system and you have no idea how?
- What if
  - The hardware you designed is too hard to program?
  - The hardware you designed is too slow because it does not provide the right primitives to the software?
- What if
  - You want to design a much more efficient and higher performance system?

Crossing the Abstraction Layers

- Two goals of this course (especially the second half) are
  - to understand how a processor works underneath the software layer and how decisions made in hardware affect the software/programmer
  - to enable you to be comfortable in making design and optimization decisions that cross the boundaries of different layers and system components

Some Example “Mysteries”

Four Mysteries: Familiar with Any?

- Meltdown & Spectre (2017-2018)
- Rowhammer (2012-2014)
- Memory Performance Attacks (2006-2007)
- Memories Forget: Refresh (2011-2012)

Mystery #1:
Meltdown & Spectre

What Are These?

Source: J. Masters, Redhat, FOSDEM 2018 keynote talk.

Meltdown and Spectre Attacks

- Someone can steal secret data from the system even though
  - your program and data are perfectly correct and
  - your hardware behaves according to the specification and
  - there are no software vulnerabilities/bugs

Meltdown and Spectre

- Hardware security vulnerabilities that essentially effect almost all computer chips that were manufactured in the past two decades

- They exploit “speculative execution”
  - A technique employed in modern processors for high performance

- Speculative execution: Doing something before you know that it is needed
  - We do it all the time in life, to save time
    - Guess what will happen and act based on that guess
  - Processors do it, too, to run programs fast
    - They guess and execute code before they know it should be executed

Speculative Execution (I)

- Modern processors "speculatively execute" code to improve performance:

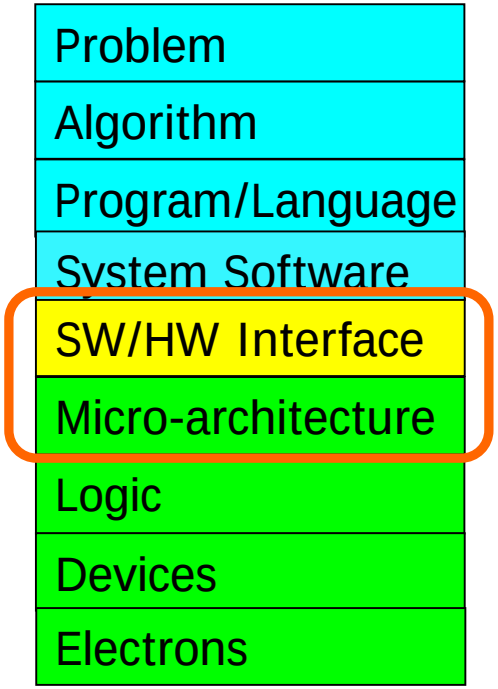
```
if (account-balance <= 0) {
    // do something
} else if (account-balance < 1M) {
    // do something else
} else {
    // do something else
}
```

Guess what code will be executed and execute it speculatively

- Improves performance, if it takes a long time to access account-balance

If the guess was wrong, flush the wrong instructions and execute the correct code

Speculative Execution is Invisible to the User



ISA
(Instruction Set Architecture)

Interface/contract between SW and HW.

What the programmer assumes hardware will satisfy.

Microarchitecture
An implementation of the ISA

Programmer assumes their code will be executed in sequential order

Microarchitecture executes instructions in a different order, speculatively – but reports the results as expected by the programmer

Meltdown and Spectre

- Someone can steal secret data from the system even though
  - your program and data are perfectly correct and
  - your hardware behaves according to the specification and
  - there are no software vulnerabilities/bugs

- Why?
  - Speculative execution leaves traces of secret data in the processor's cache (internal storage)
    - It brings data that is not supposed to be brought/accessed if there was no speculative execution
  - A malicious program can inspect the contents of the cache to "infer" secret data that it is not supposed to access
  - A malicious program can actually force another program to speculatively execute code that leaves traces of secret data

Processor Cache as a Side Channel

- Speculative execution leaves traces of data in processor cache
  - **Architecturally correct behavior w.r.t. specification**
  - However, this leads to a side channel: a channel through which someone sophisticated can extract information

- Processor cache leaks information by storing speculatively-accessed data
  - A clever attacker can probe the cache and infer the secret data values
    - by measuring how long it takes to access the data
  - A clever attacker can force a program to speculatively execute code and leave traces of secret data in the cache

More on Meltdown/Spectre Side Channels

Project Zero

News and updates from the Project Zero team at Google

Wednesday, January 3, 2018

Reading privileged memory with a side-channel

Posted by Jann Horn, Project Zero

We have discovered that CPU data cache timing can be abused to efficiently leak information out of mis-speculated execution, leading to (at worst) arbitrary virtual memory read vulnerabilities across local security boundaries in various contexts.

Source: https://googleprojectzero.blogspot.ch/2018/01/reading-privileged-memory-with-side.html

Three Questions

- Can you figure out why someone stole your secret data if you do not know how the processor executes a program?
- Can you fix the problem without knowing what is happening “underneath”, i.e., inside the microarchitecture?
- Can you fix the problem well/fundamentally without knowing both software and hardware design?
- Can you construct this attack or similar attacks without knowing what is happening underneath?

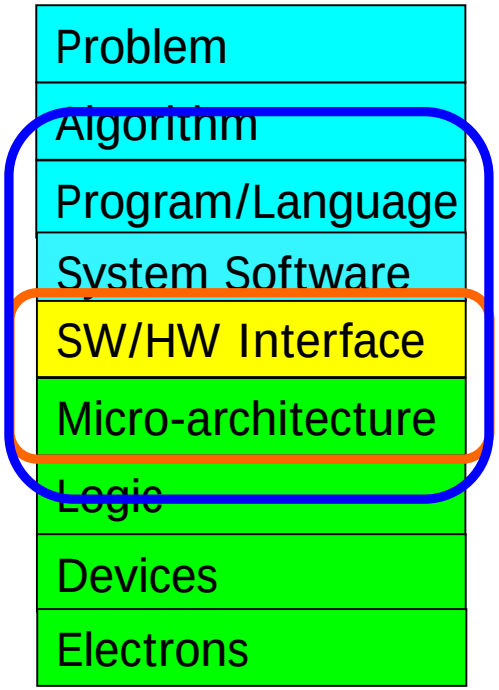
Three Other Questions

- What are the causes of Meltdown and Spectre?
- How can we prevent them (while keeping the performance benefits of speculative execution)?
  - Software changes?
  - Operating system changes?
  - Instruction set architecture changes?
  - Microarchitecture/hardware changes?
  - Changes at multiple layers, done cooperatively?
  - ...
- How do we design high-performance processors that do not leak information via side channels?

Meltdown/Spectre Span Across the Hierarchy

Computer Architecture (expanded view)

Meltdown/Spectre problem and solution space



Computer Architecture (narrow view)

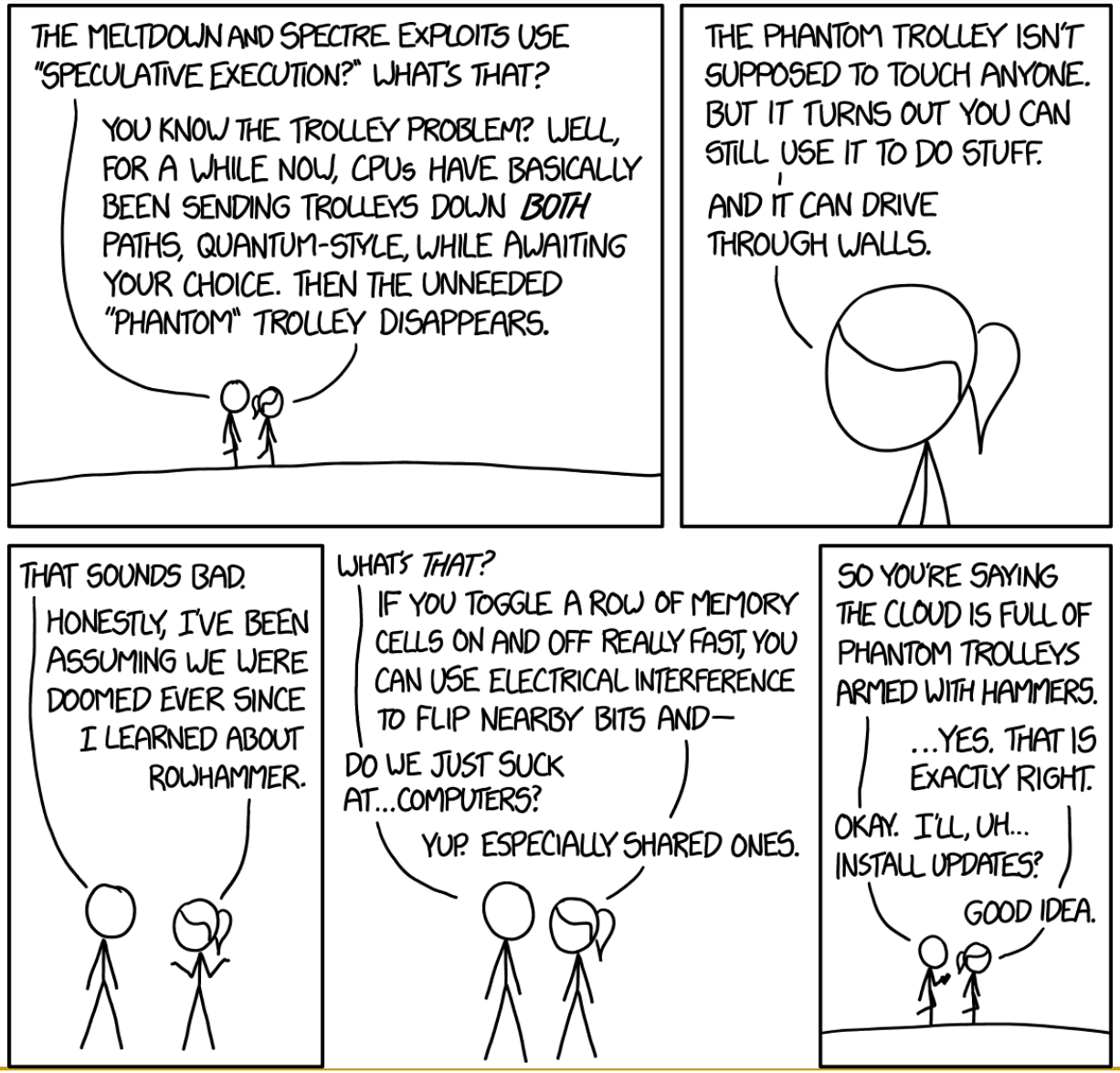
Takeaway

Breaking the abstraction layers (between components and transformation hierarchy levels)

and knowing what is underneath

enables you to **understand** and **solve** problems

… and Also Understand/Critique Cartoons!



Source: https://xkcd.com/1938/

An Important Note: Design Goal and Mindset

- Design goal of a system determines the design mindset and evaluation metrics

- Meltdown and Spectre are there because the design goal of cutting-edge processors (employed everywhere in our lives)
  - has mainly been focused on high performance and low energy (relatively recently)
  - has not included security (or information leakage) as an important constraint

- Incorporating security as a first-class constraint and "metric" into (hardware) design and education is critical in today's world

Design Mindset

Security is about preventing unforeseen consequences

Source: https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/48/09/54/4809543a9c7700246a0cf8acdae27abf.jpg

Two Other Goals of This Course

- Enable you to think critically
- Enable you to think broadly

To Learn and Discover Further

- High-level Video by RedHat
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syAdX44pokE
- A bit lower-level, comprehensive explanation by Y. Vigfusson
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgAN4w7LH2o
- Keep attending lectures and taking in all the material
- Go and talk with myself in the future
  - I have many bachelor's/master's projects on hardware security
  - "Fundamentally secure computing architectures" is a key direction of scientific investigation and design

Mystery #2: RowHammer

The Story of RowHammer

- One can predictably induce bit flips in commodity DRAM chips
  - >80% of the tested DRAM chips are vulnerable
- First example of how a simple hardware failure mechanism can create a widespread system security vulnerability

WIRED

Forget Software—Now Hackers Are Exploiting Physics

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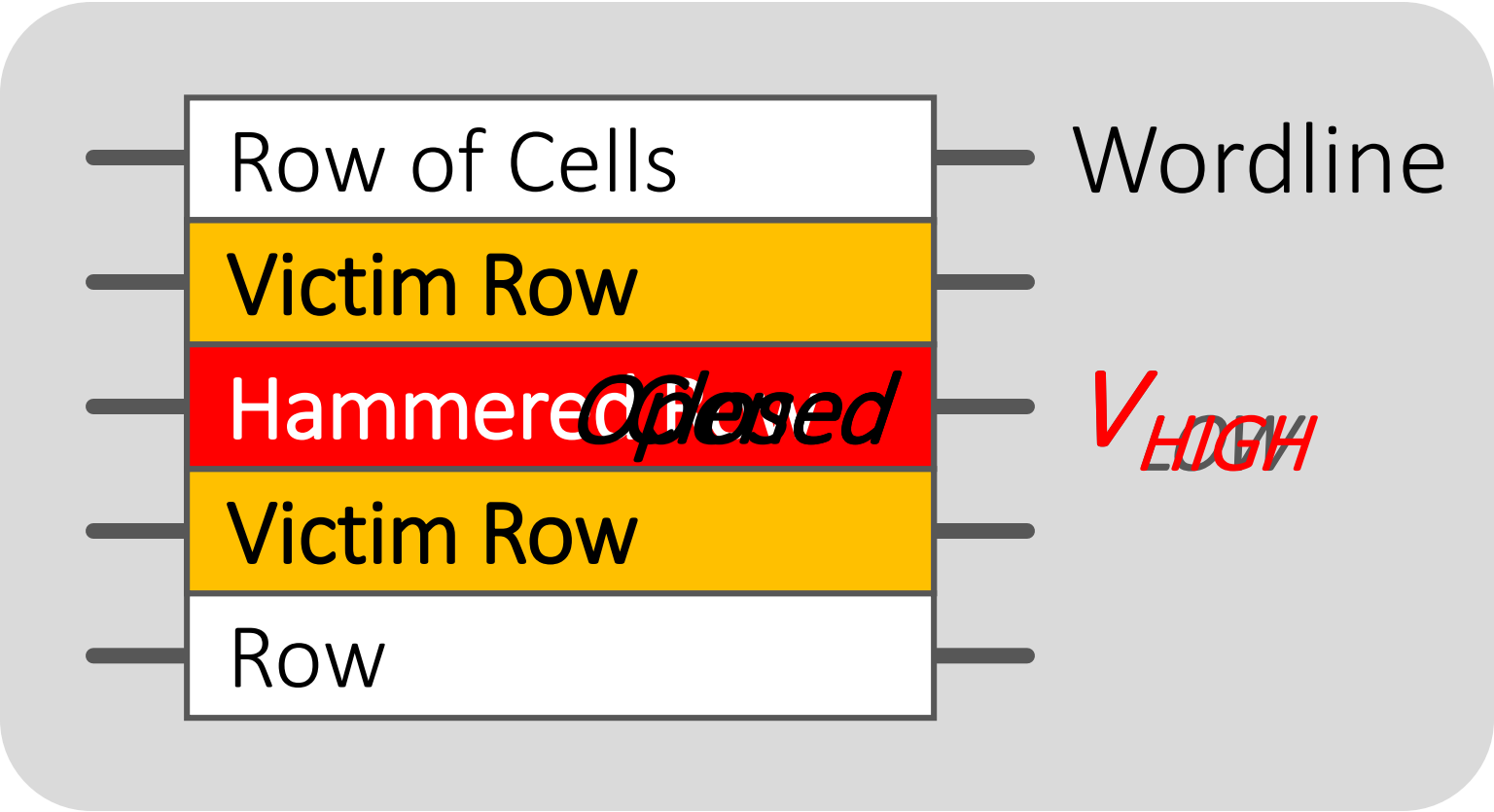
ANDY GREENBERG SECURITY 08.31.16 7:00 AM

FORGET SOFTWARE—NOW HACKERS ARE EXPLOITING PHYSICS

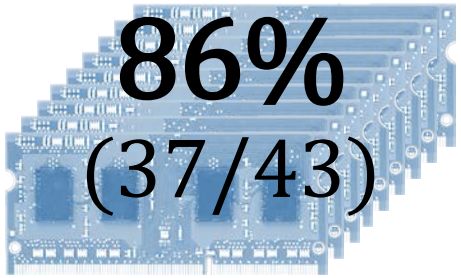
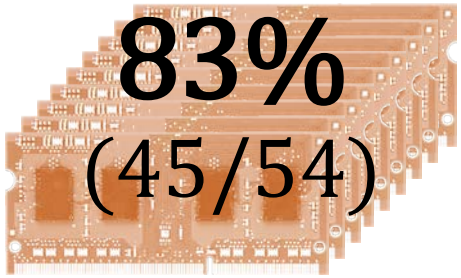
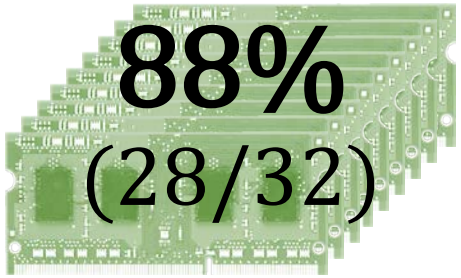
Modern DRAM is Prone to Disturbance Errors



Repeatedly opening and closing a row enough times within a refresh interval induces disturbance errors in adjacent rows in most real DRAM chips you can buy today

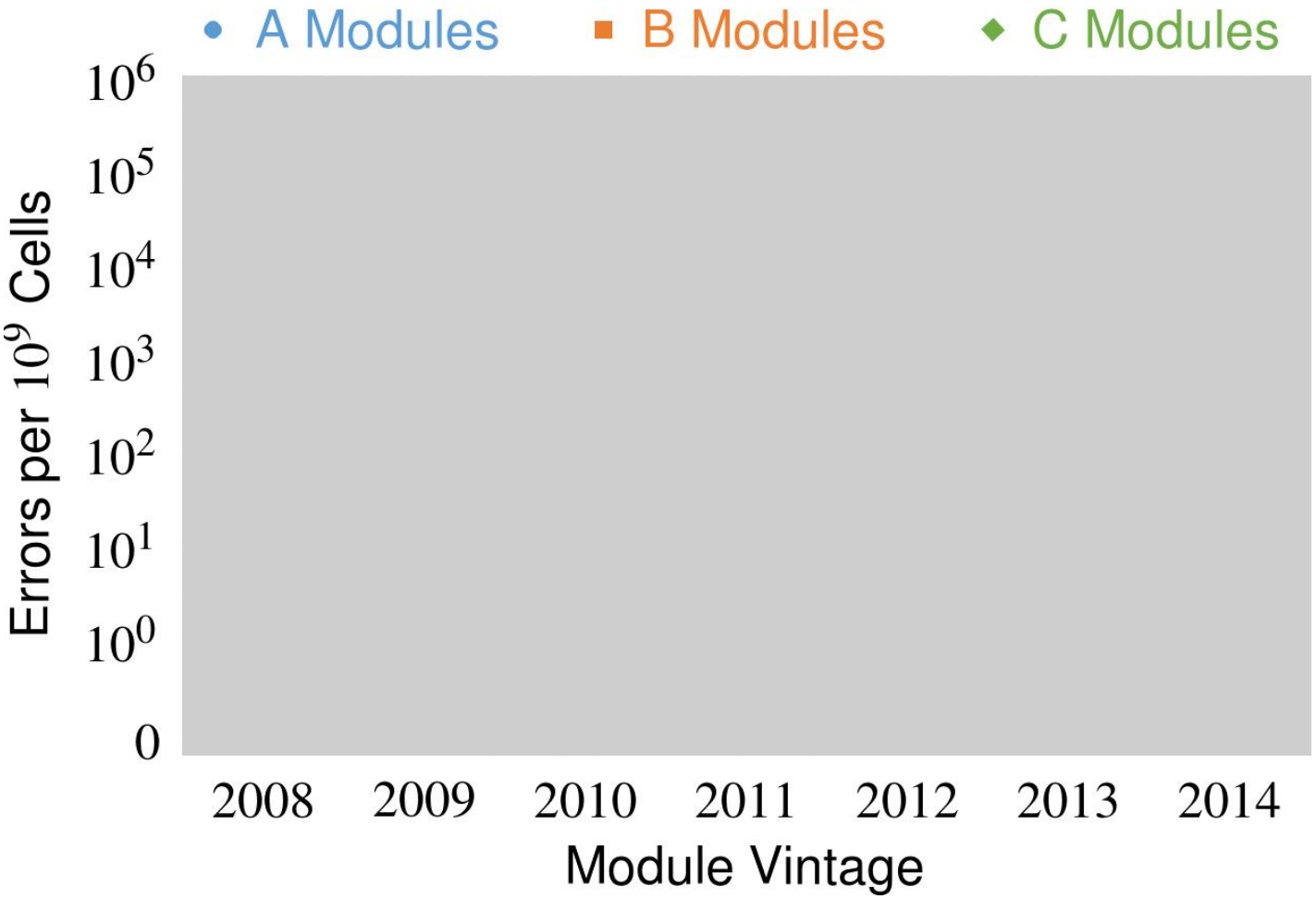
Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors, (Kim et al., ISCA 2014)

Most DRAM Modules Are Vulnerable

A company	B company	C company
		
86% (37/43)	**83%** (45/54)	**88%** (28/32)
Up to **1.0×10^{7}** errors	Up to **2.7×10^{6}** errors	Up to **3.3×10^{5}** errors

Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors, (Kim et al., ISCA 2014)

Recent DRAM Is More Vulnerable



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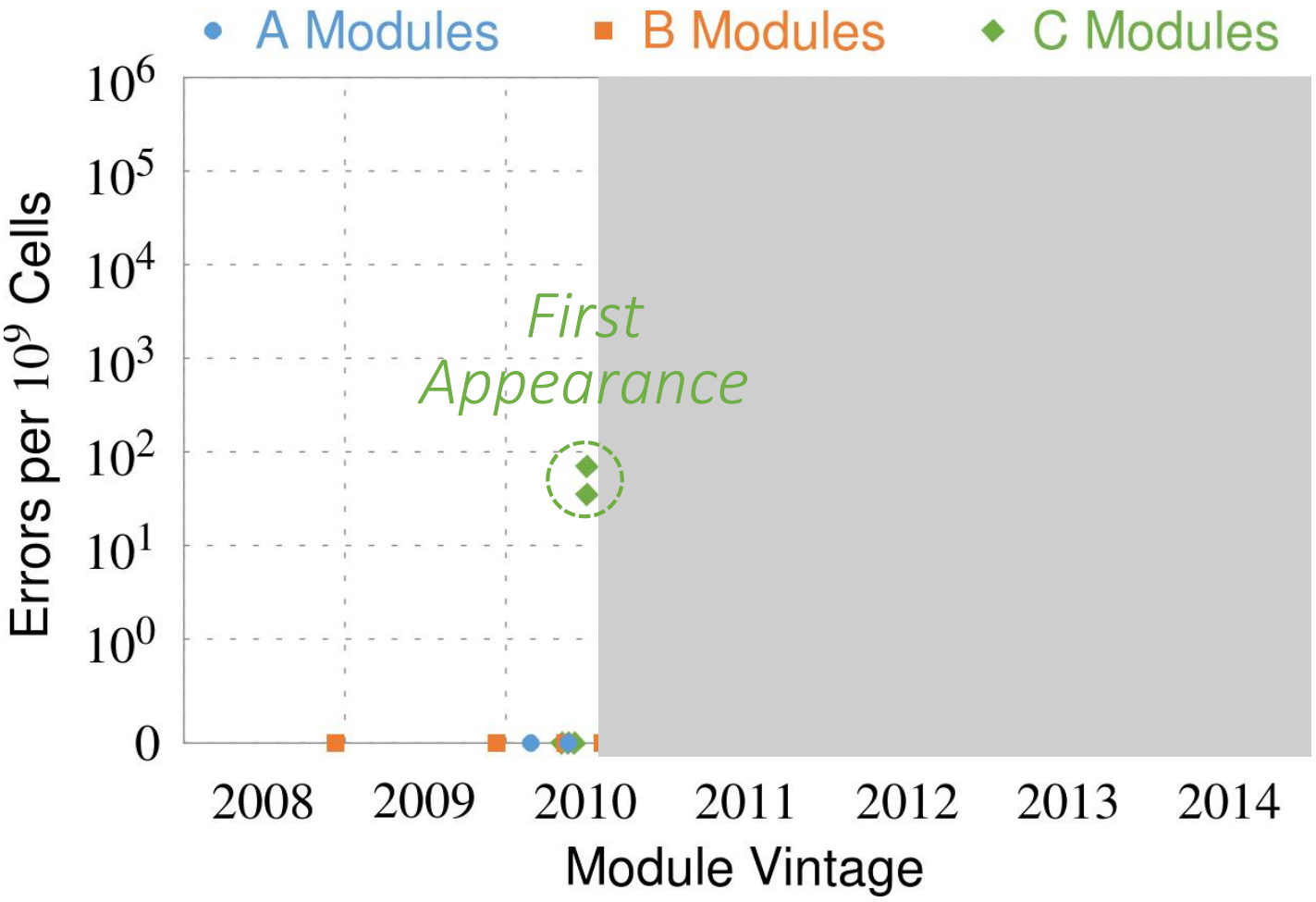

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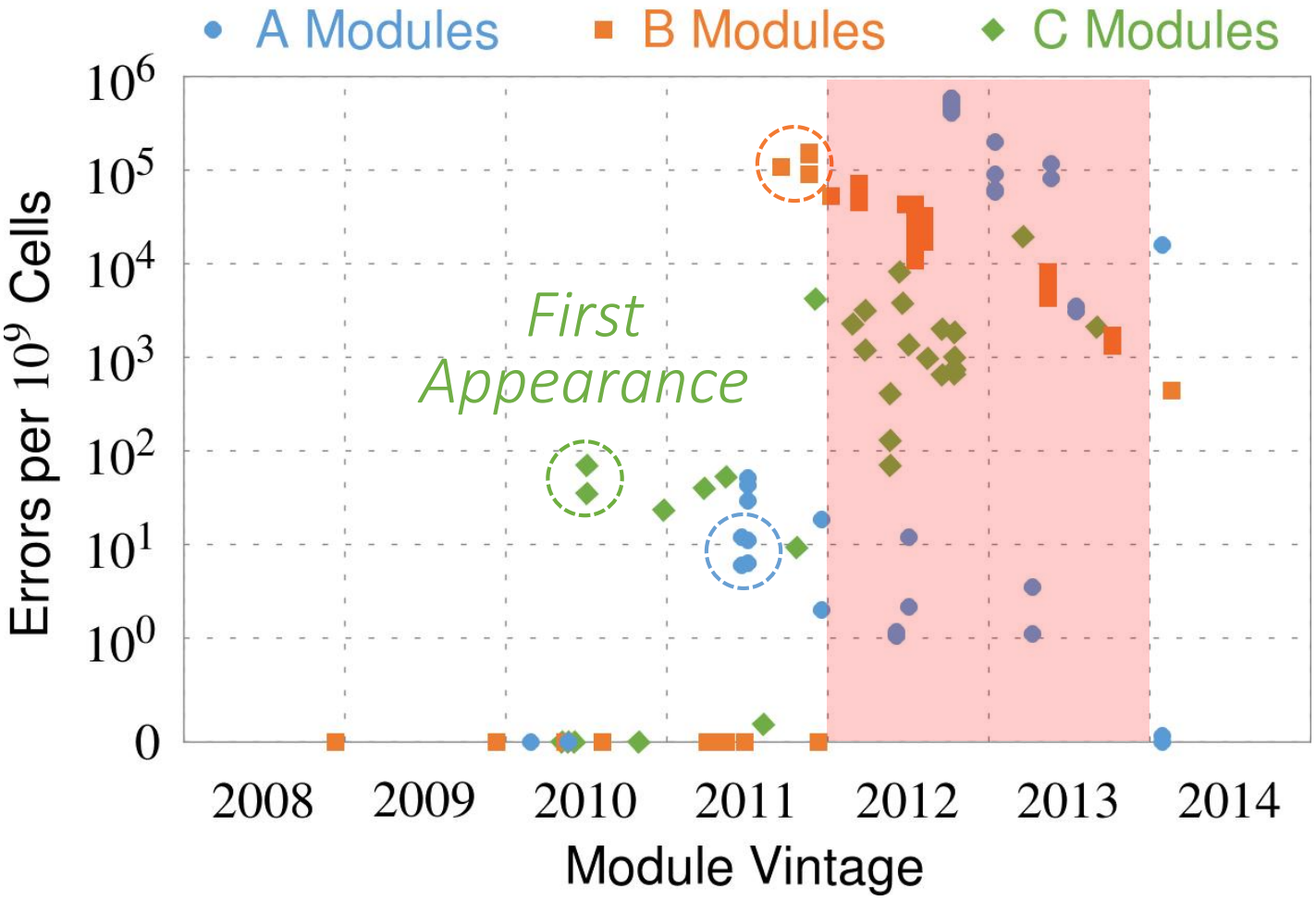


All modules from 2012–2013 are vulnerable

Why Is This Happening?

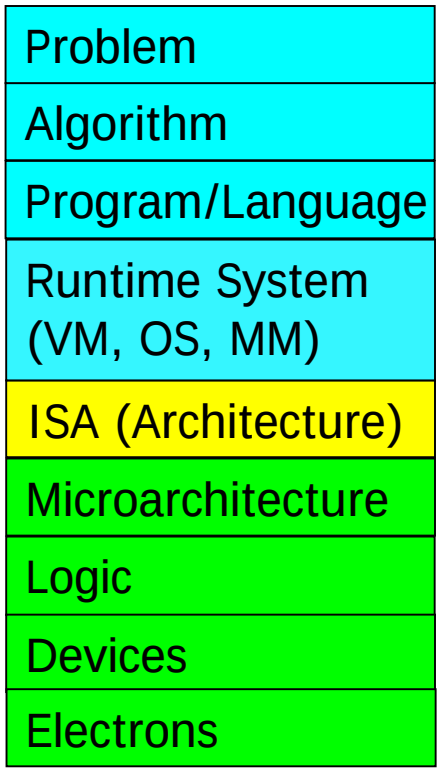
- DRAM cells are too close to each other!
  - They are not electrically isolated from each other

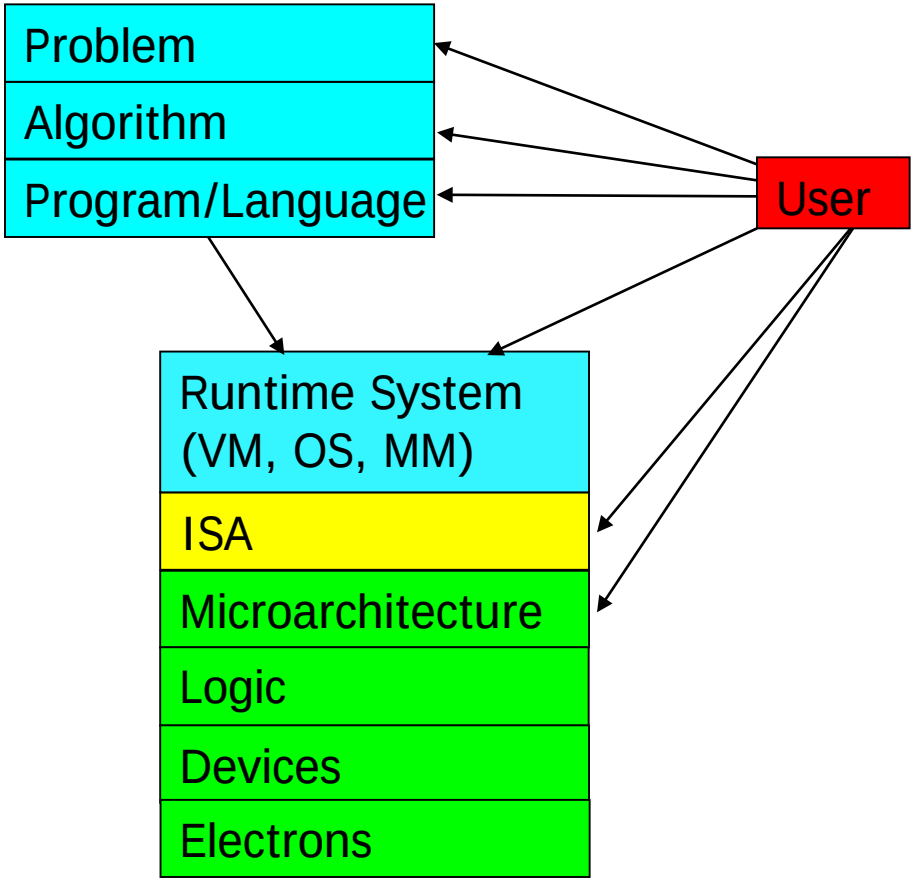
- Access to one cell affects the value in nearby cells
  - due to electrical interference between
    - the cells
    - wires used for accessing the cells
  - Also called cell-to-cell coupling/interference

- Example: When we activate (apply high voltage) to a row, an adjacent row gets slightly activated as well
  - Vulnerable cells in that slightly-activated row lose a little bit of charge
  - If row hammer happens enough times, charge in such cells gets drained

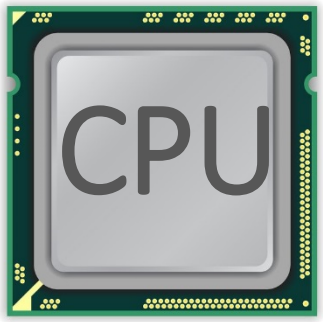
Higher-Level Implications

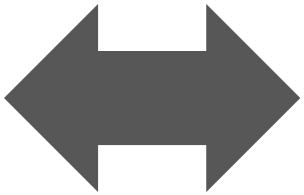
- This simple circuit-level failure mechanism has enormous implications on upper layers of the transformation hierarchy

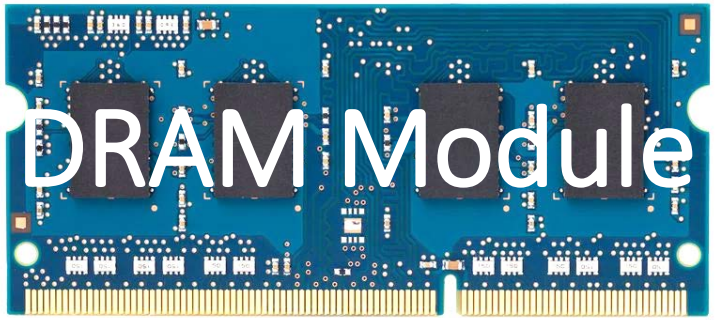




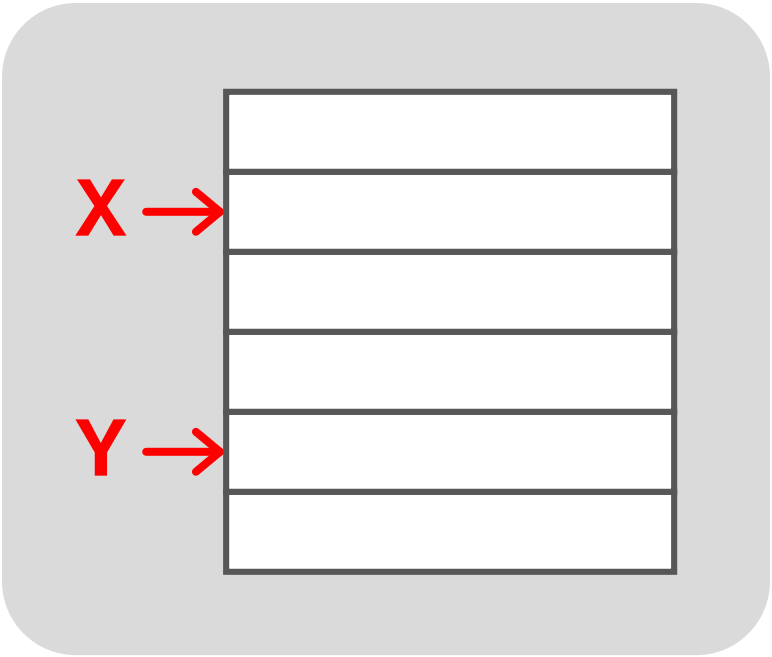
A Simple Program Can Induce Many Errors








```
loop:
  mov (X), %eax
  mov (Y), %ebx
  clflush (X)
  clflush (Y)
  mfence
  jmp loop
```



Download from: https://github.com/CMU-SAFARI/rowhammer

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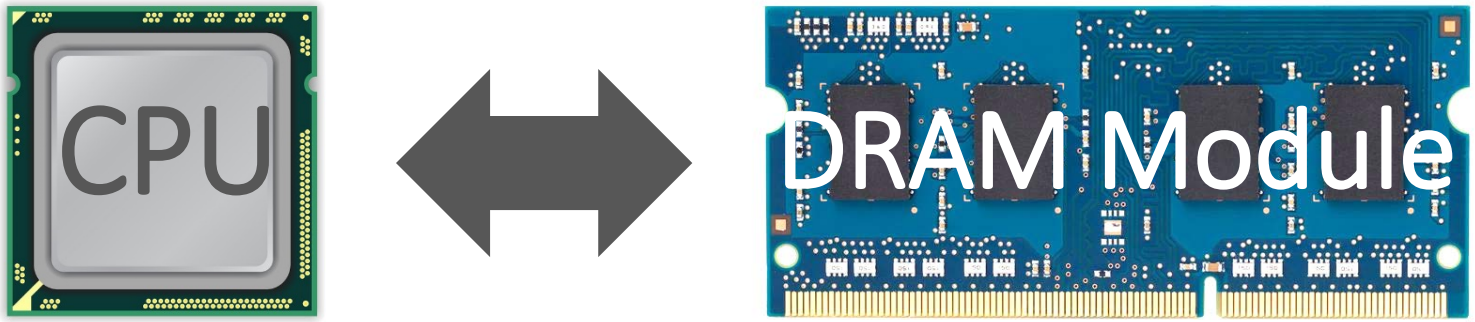
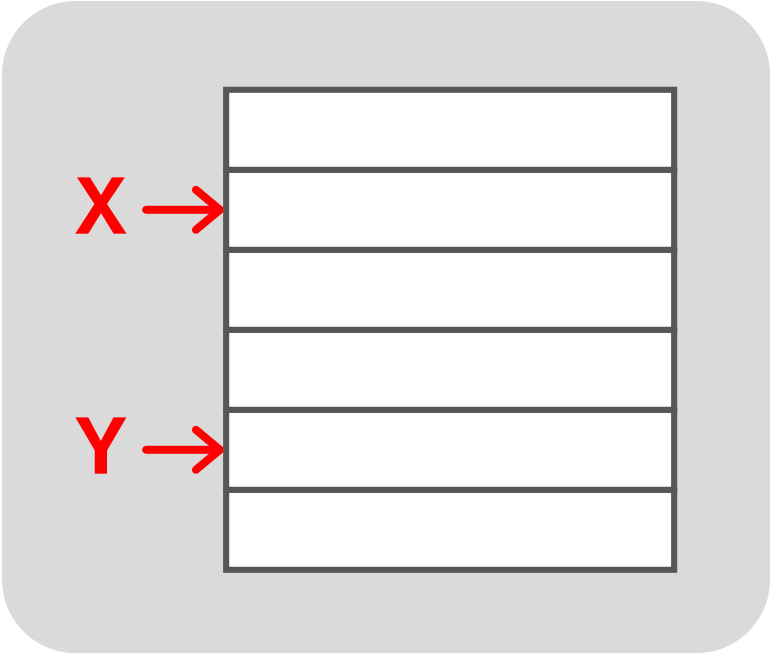


1. Avoid *cache hits*
   – Flush **X** from cache

2. Avoid *row hits* to **X**
   – Read **Y** in another row



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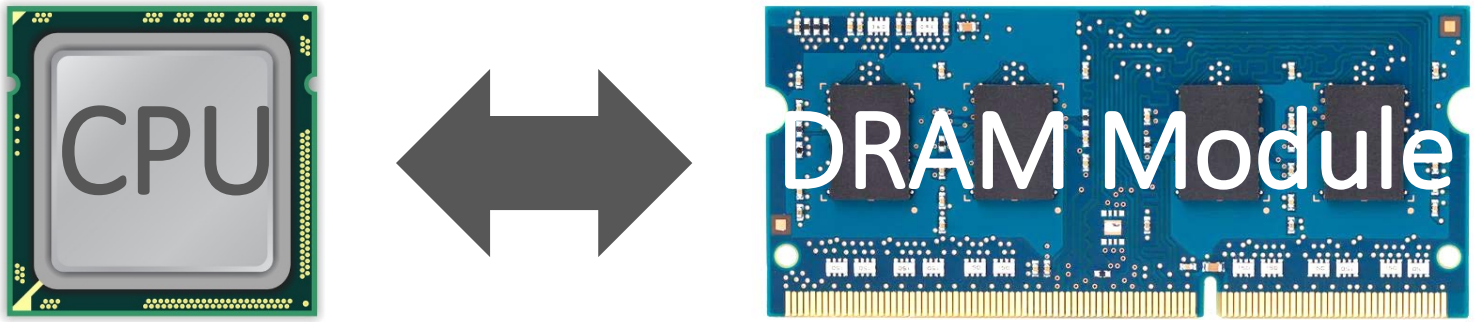


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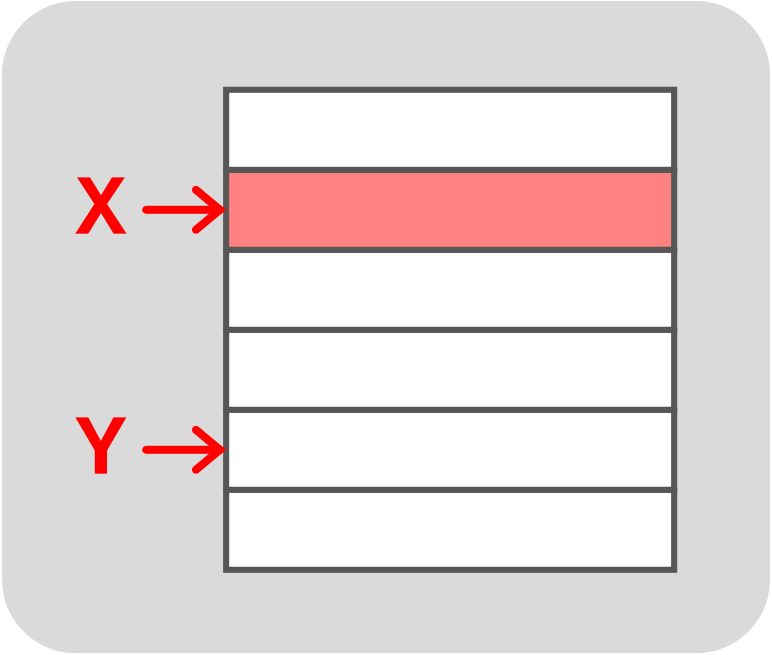

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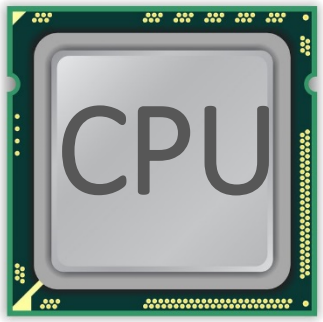

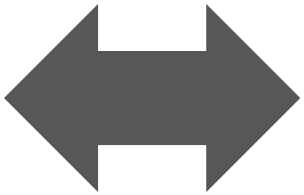

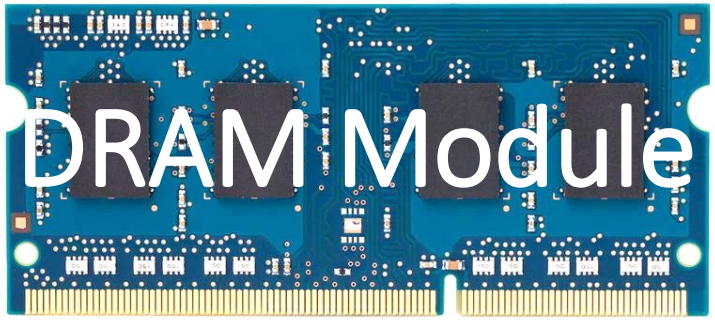


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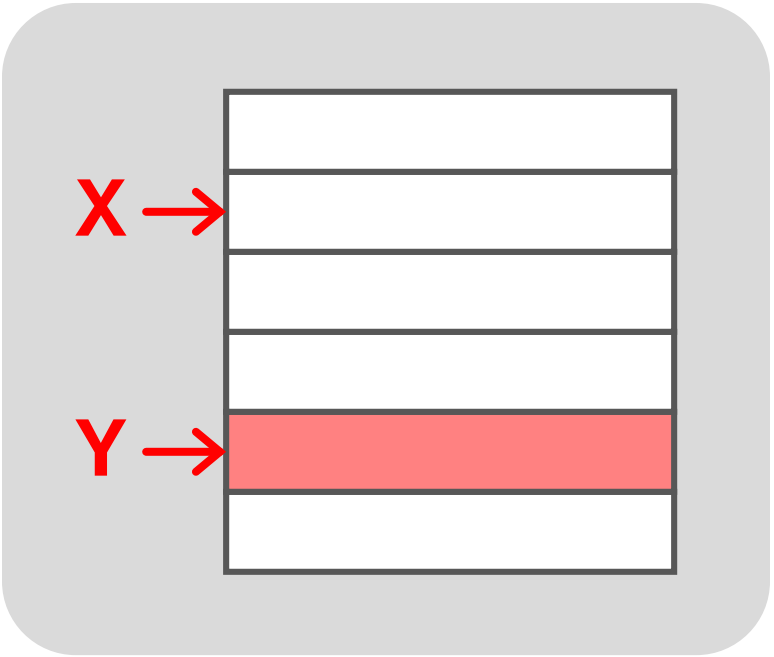

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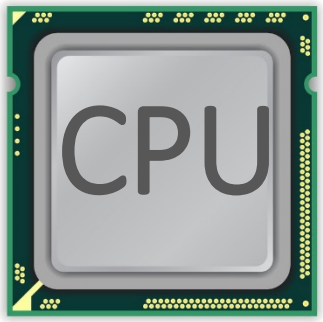

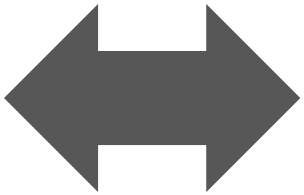

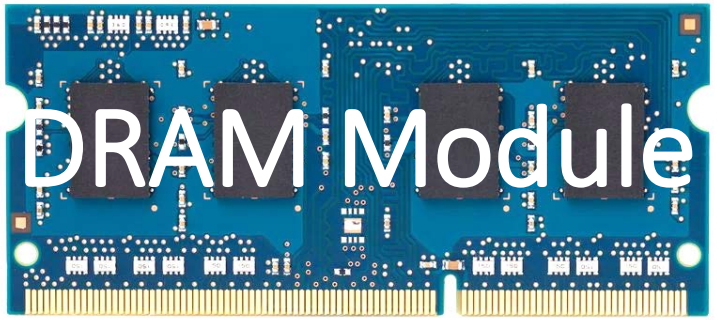


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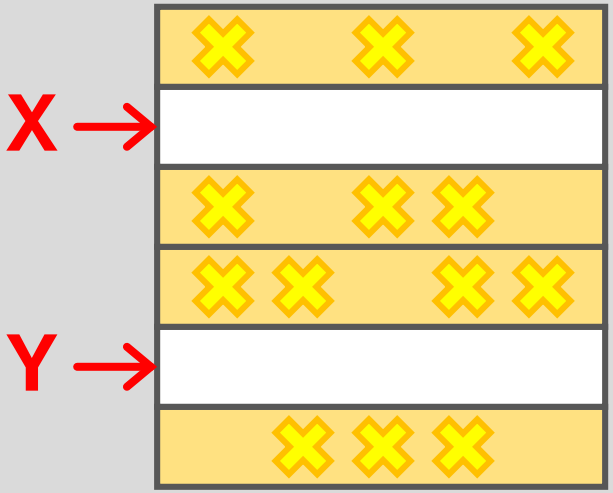

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Observed Errors in Real Systems

CPU Architecture	Errors	Access-Rate
Intel Haswell (2013)	22.9K	12.3M/sec
Intel Ivy Bridge (2012)	20.7K	11.7M/sec
Intel Sandy Bridge (2011)	16.1K	11.6M/sec
AMD Piledriver (2012)	59	6.1M/sec

A real reliability & security issue

Kim+, "Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors," ISCA 2014.

One Can Take Over an Otherwise-Secure System

Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors

Abstract. Memory isolation is a key property of a reliable and secure computing system — an access to one memory address should not have unintended side effects on data stored in other addresses. However, as DRAM process technology

Project Zero

Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors (Kim et al., ISCA 2014)

News and updates from the Project Zero team at Google

Exploiting the DRAM rowhammer bug to gain kernel privileges (Seaborn, 2015)

Monday, March 9, 2015

Exploiting the DRAM rowhammer bug to gain kernel privileges

RowHammer Security Attack Example

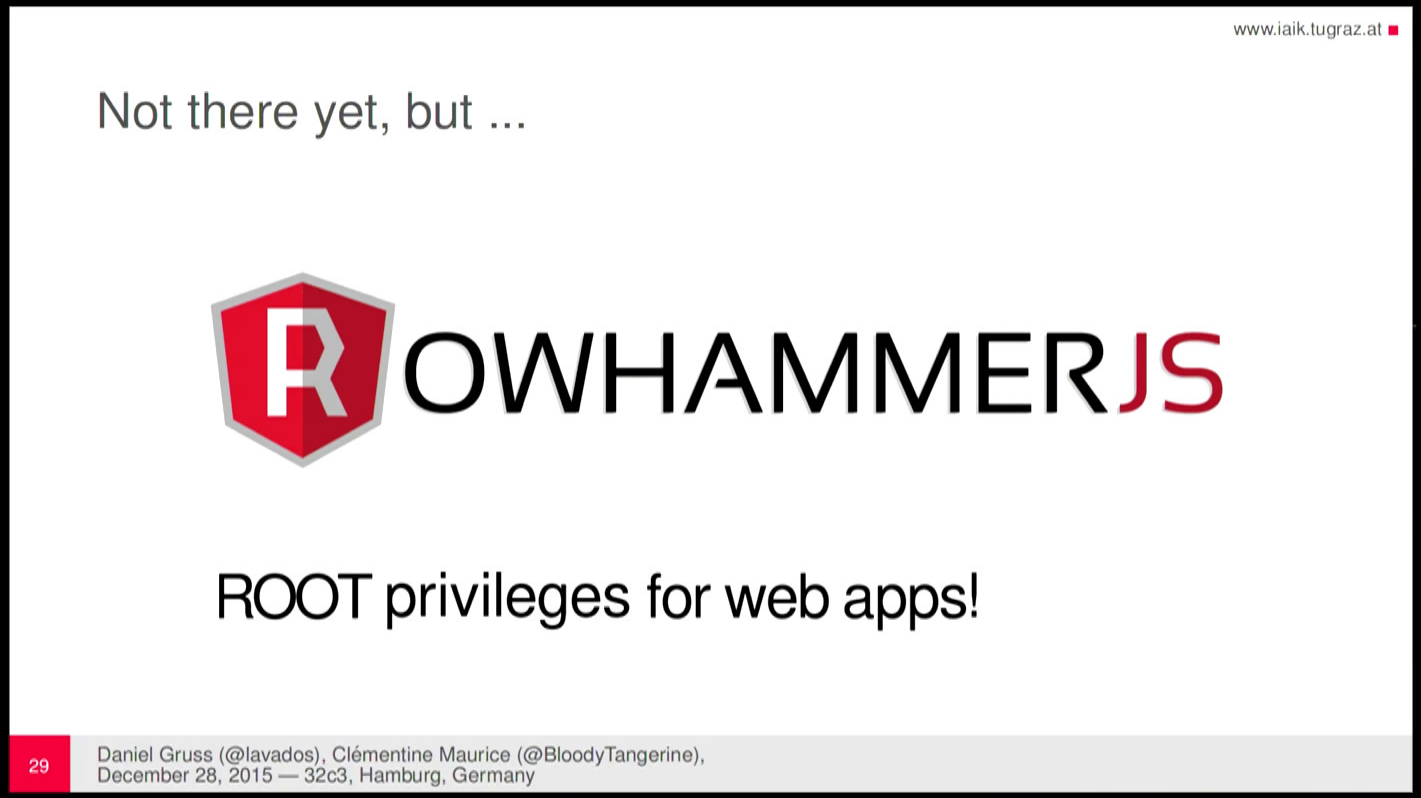
- "Rowhammer" is a problem with some recent DRAM devices in which repeatedly accessing a row of memory can cause bit flips in adjacent rows (Kim et al., ISCA 2014).
  - Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors (Kim et al., ISCA 2014)
- We tested a selection of laptops and found that a subset of them exhibited the problem.
- We built two working privilege escalation exploits that use this effect.
  - Exploiting the DRAM rowhammer bug to gain kernel privileges (Seaborn, 2015)
- One exploit uses rowhammer-induced bit flips to gain kernel privileges on x86-64 Linux when run as an unprivileged userland process.
- When run on a machine vulnerable to the rowhammer problem, the process was able to induce bit flips in page table entries (PTEs).
- It was able to use this to gain write access to its own page table, and hence gain read-write access to all of physical memory.

Security Implications

It's like breaking into an apartment by repeatedly slamming a neighbor's door until the vibrations open the door you were after

More Security Implications

“We can gain unrestricted access to systems of website visitors.”



Rowhammer.js: A Remote Software-Induced Fault Attack in JavaScript (DIMVA’16)

Source: https://lab.dsst.io/32c3-slides/7197.html

More Security Implications

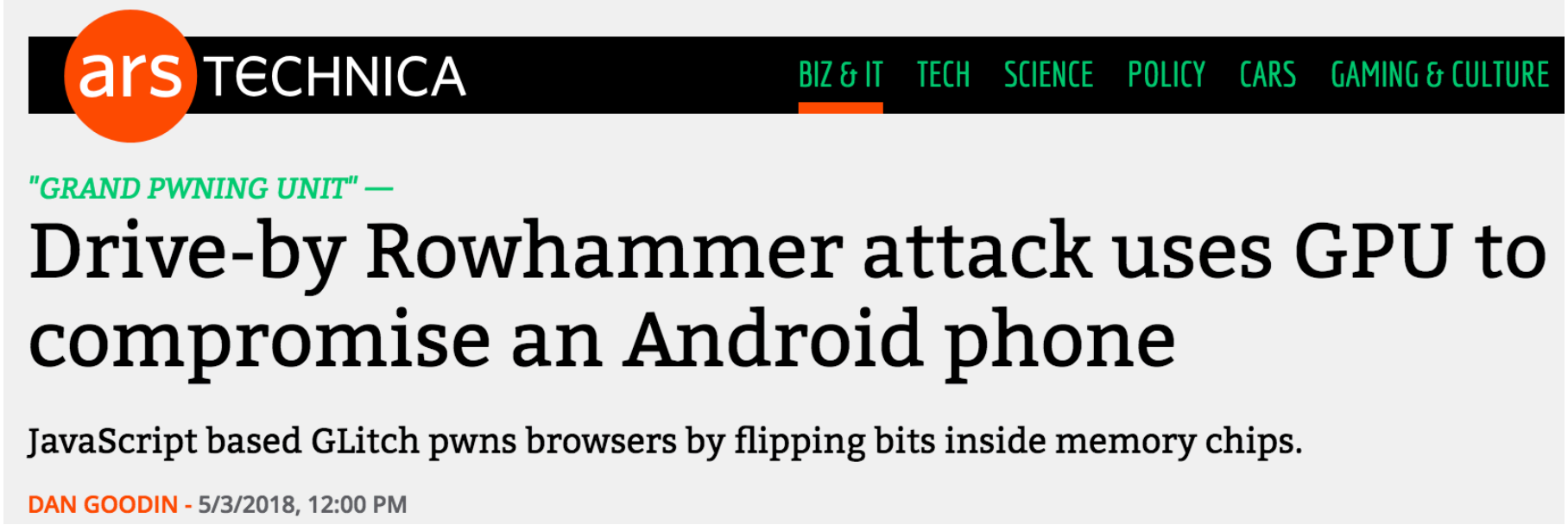
“Can gain control of a smart phone deterministically”

Drammer: Deterministic Rowhammer Attacks on Mobile Platforms, CCS’16

Source: https://fossbytes.com/drammer-rowhammer-attack-android-root-devices/

More Security Implications (III)

- Using an integrated GPU in a mobile system to remotely escalate privilege via the WebGL interface



Grand Pwning Unit: Accelerating Microarchitectural Attacks with the GPU

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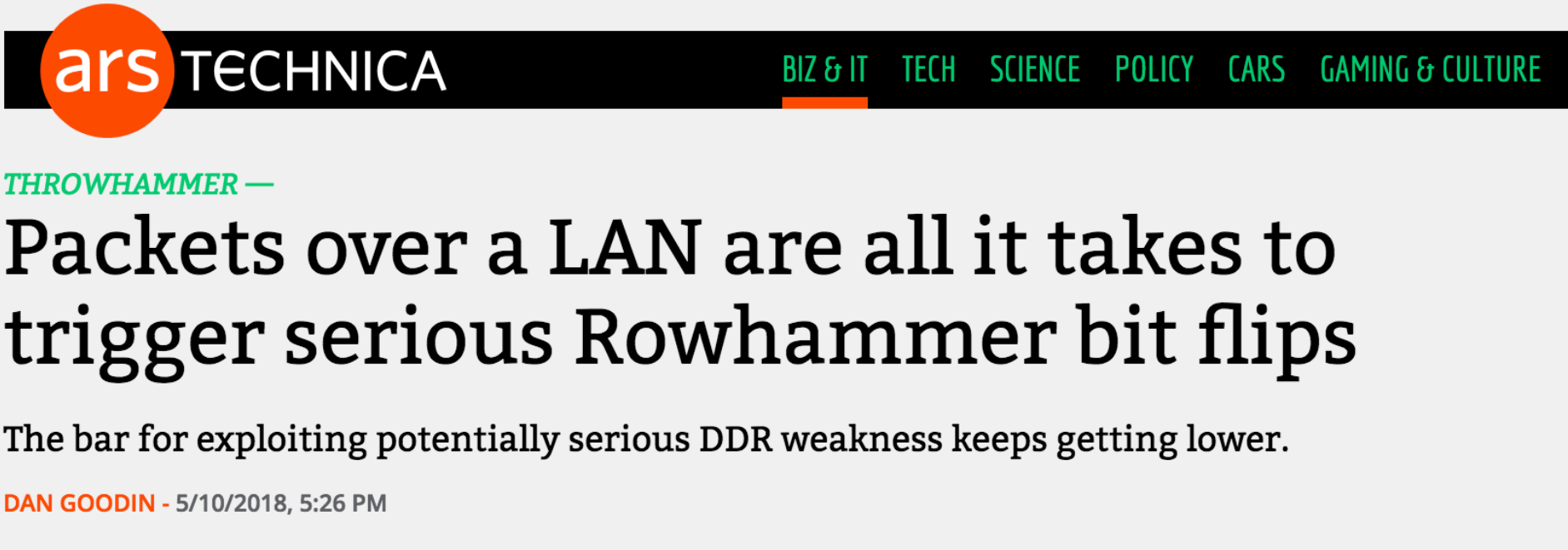
More Security Implications (IV)

- Rowhammer over RDMA (I)



Throwhammer: Rowhammer Attacks over the Network and Defenses

Andrei Tatar
VU Amsterdam

Radhesh Krishnan
VU Amsterdam

Elias Athanasopoulos
University of Cyprus

Cristiano Giuffrida
VU Amsterdam

Herbert Bos
VU Amsterdam

Kaveh Razavi
VU Amsterdam

More Security Implications (V)

- Rowhammer over RDMA (II)

The Hacker News™
Security in a serious way

Nethammer—Exploiting DRAM Rowhammer Bug Through Network Requests

Nethammer:
Inducing Rowhammer Faults through Network Requests

Moritz Lipp
Graz University of Technology

Misiker Tadesse Aga
University of Michigan

Michael Schwarz
Graz University of Technology

Daniel Gruss
Graz University of Technology

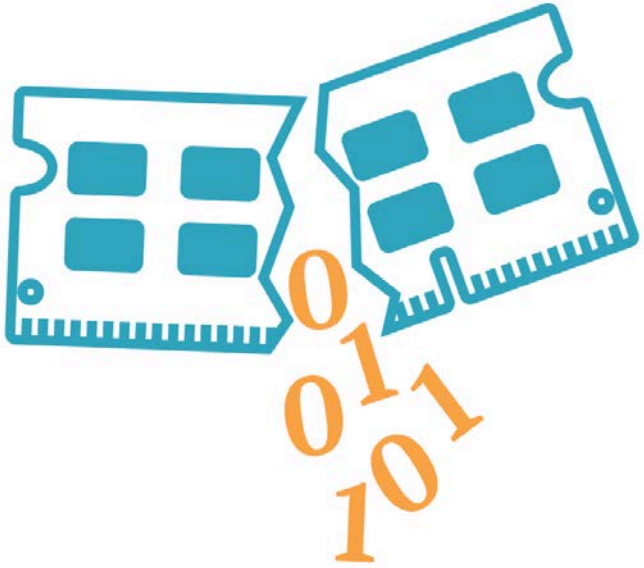
Clémentine Maurice
Univ Rennes, CNRS, IRISA

Lukas Raab
Graz University of Technology

Lukas Lamster
Graz University of Technology

More Security Implications (VI)

- IEEE S&P 2020



RAMBleed

RAMBleed: Reading Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them

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More Security Implications (VII)

- Rowhammer on MLC NAND Flash (based on [Cai+, HPCA 2017])

The Register®
Biting the hand that feeds IT

Security

Rowhammer RAM attack adapted to hit flash storage

Project Zero's two-year-old dog learns a new trick

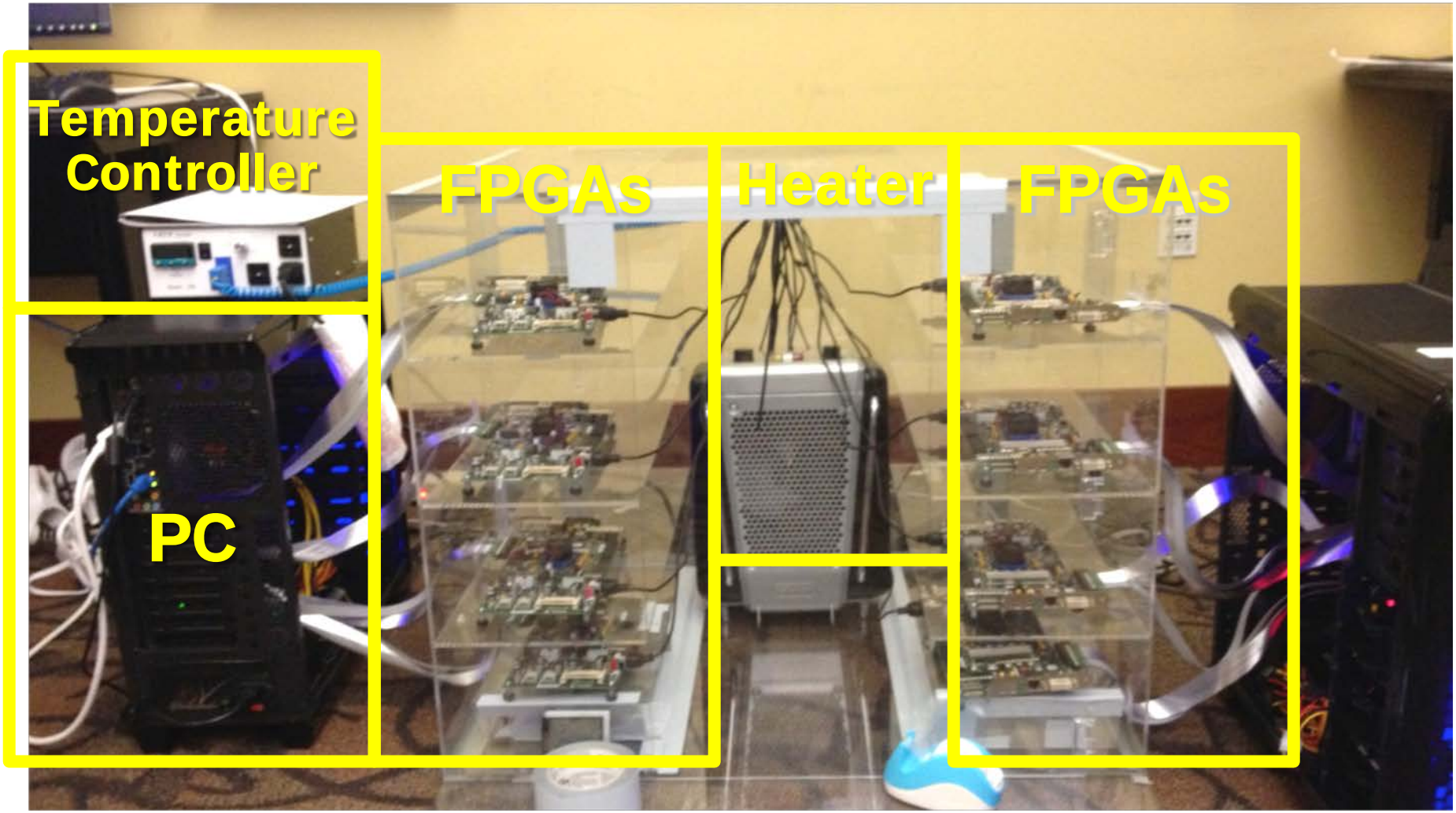
By Richard Chirgwin 17 Aug 2017 at 04:27 17 SHARE ▼

From random block corruption to privilege escalation: A filesystem attack vector for rowhammer-like attacks

Anil Kurmus Nikolas Ioannou Matthias Neugschwandtner Nikolaos Papandreou
Thomas Parnell
IBM Research – Zurich

More Security Implications?

Where RowHammer Was Discovered…



Kim+, "Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors," ISCA 2014.

How Do We Fix The Problem?

Some Potential Solutions

- Make better DRAM chips — Cost
- Refresh frequently — Power, Performance
- Sophisticated Error Correction — Cost, Power
- Access counters — Cost, Power, Complexity

Apple's Security Patch for RowHammer

- https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT204934

Available for: OS X Mountain Lion v10.8.5, OS X Mavericks v10.9.5

Impact: A malicious application may induce memory corruption to escalate privileges

Description: A disturbance error, also known as Rowhammer, exists with some DDR3 RAM that could have led to memory corruption. This issue was mitigated by increasing memory refresh rates.

CVE-ID

CVE-2015-3693 : Mark Seaborn and Thomas Dullien of Google, working from original research by Yoongu Kim et al (2014)

HP, Lenovo, and many other vendors released similar patches

A Cheaper Solution

- **PARA:** *Probabilistic Adjacent Row Activation*
- **Key Idea**
  - After closing a row, we activate (i.e., refresh) one of its neighbors with a low probability: $\mathrm{p} = 0.005$
- **Reliability Guarantee**
  - When $\mathrm{p}=0.005$, errors in one year: 9.4×10^{-14}
  - By adjusting the value of p, we can provide an arbitrarily strong protection against errors

Some Thoughts on RowHammer

- A simple hardware failure mechanism can create a widespread system security vulnerability

- How to find, exploit and fix the vulnerability requires a strong understanding across the transformation layers
  - And, a strong understanding of tools available to you

- Fixing needs to happen for two types of chips
  - Existing chips (already in the field)
  - Future chips
- Mechanisms for fixing are different between the two types

Aside: Byzantine Failures

- This class of failures is known as Byzantine failures

- Characterized by
  - Undetected erroneous computation
  - Opposite of “fail fast (with an error or no result)”

- “erroneous” can be “malicious” (intent is the only distinction)
- Very difficult to detect and confine Byzantine failures
- Do all you can to avoid them

- Lamport et al., “The Byzantine Generals Problem,” ACM TOPLAS 1982.

Aside: Byzantine Generals Problem

The Byzantine Generals Problem

LESLIE LAMPORT, ROBERT SHOSTAK, and MARSHALL PEASE
SRI International

Reliable computer systems must handle malfunctioning components that give conflicting information to different parts of the system. This situation can be expressed abstractly in terms of a group of generals of the Byzantine army camped with their troops around an enemy city. Communicating only by messenger, the generals must agree upon a common battle plan. However, one or more of them may be traitors who will try to confuse the others. The problem is to find an algorithm to ensure that the loyal generals will reach agreement. It is shown that, using only oral messages, this problem is solvable if and only if more than two-thirds of the generals are loyal; so a single traitor can confound two loyal generals. With unforgeable written messages, the problem is solvable for any number of generals and possible traitors. Applications of the solutions to reliable computer systems are then discussed.

Categories and Subject Descriptors: C.2.4. [**Computer-Communication Networks**]: Distributed Systems—*network operating systems*; D.4.4 [**Operating Systems**]: Communications Management—*network communication*; D.4.5 [**Operating Systems**]: Reliability—*fault tolerance*

General Terms: Algorithms, Reliability

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Interactive consistency

https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=357176

Really Interested?

- Our first detailed study: Rowhammer analysis and solutions (June 2014)
  - Yoongu Kim, Ross Daly, Jeremie Kim, Chris Fallin, Ji Hye Lee, Donghyuk Lee, Chris Wilkerson, Konrad Lai, and Onur Mutlu,
    "Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors"
    Proceedings of the 41st International Symposium on Computer Architecture (ISCA), Minneapolis, MN, June 2014. [Slides (pptx) (pdf)] [Lightning Session Slides (pptx) (pdf)] [Source Code and Data]

- Our Source Code to Induce Errors in Modern DRAM Chips (June 2014)
  - https://github.com/CMU-SAFARI/rowhammer

- Google Project Zero's Attack to Take Over a System (March 2015)
  - Exploiting the DRAM rowhammer bug to gain kernel privileges (Seaborn+, 2015)
  - https://github.com/google/rowhammer-test
  - Double-sided Rowhammer

RowHammer: Five Years Ago…

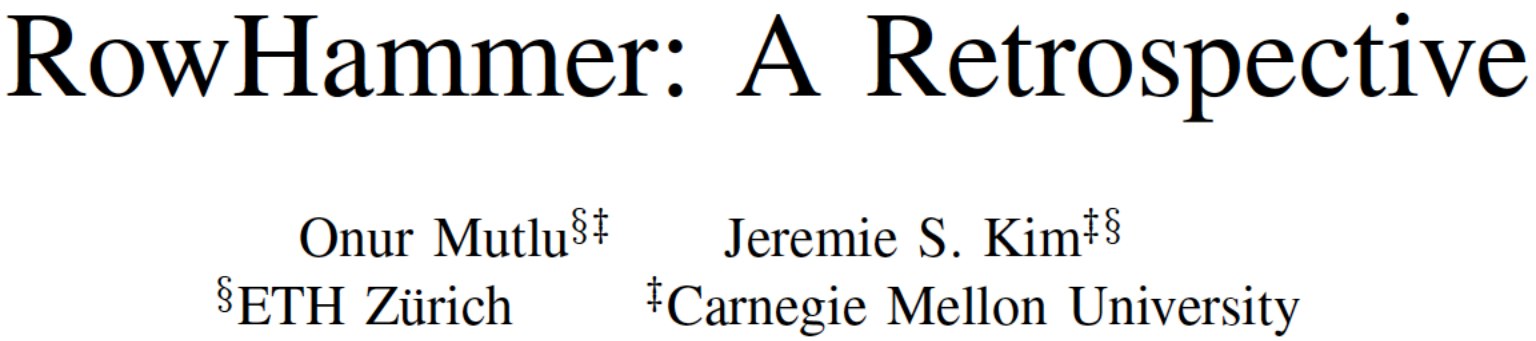
- Yoongu Kim, Ross Daly, Jeremie Kim, Chris Fallin, Ji Hye Lee, Donghyuk Lee, Chris Wilkerson, Konrad Lai, and Onur Mutlu,
  "Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors"
  *Proceedings of the 41st International Symposium on Computer Architecture (**ISCA**)*, Minneapolis, MN, June 2014.
  [Slides (pptx) (pdf)] [Lightning Session Slides (pptx) (pdf)] [Source Code and Data]

Flipping Bits in Memory Without Accessing Them: An Experimental Study of DRAM Disturbance Errors

Yoongu Kim[1] Ross Daly* Jeremie Kim[1] Chris Fallin* Ji Hye Lee[1]
Donghyuk Lee[1] Chris Wilkerson[2] Konrad Lai Onur Mutlu[1]
[1]Carnegie Mellon University [2]Intel Labs

RowHammer: Now and Beyond…

- Onur Mutlu and Jeremie Kim,
  "RowHammer: A Retrospective"
  IEEE Transactions on Computer-Aided Design of Integrated Circuits and Systems ***(TCAD)*** *Special Issue on Top Picks in Hardware and Embedded Security*, 2019.
  [Preliminary arXiv version]


RowHammer: A Retrospective

Onur Mutlu[§‡] Jeremie S. Kim[‡§]
[§]ETH Zürich [‡]Carnegie Mellon University

Takeaway

Breaking the abstraction layers (between components and transformation hierarchy levels)

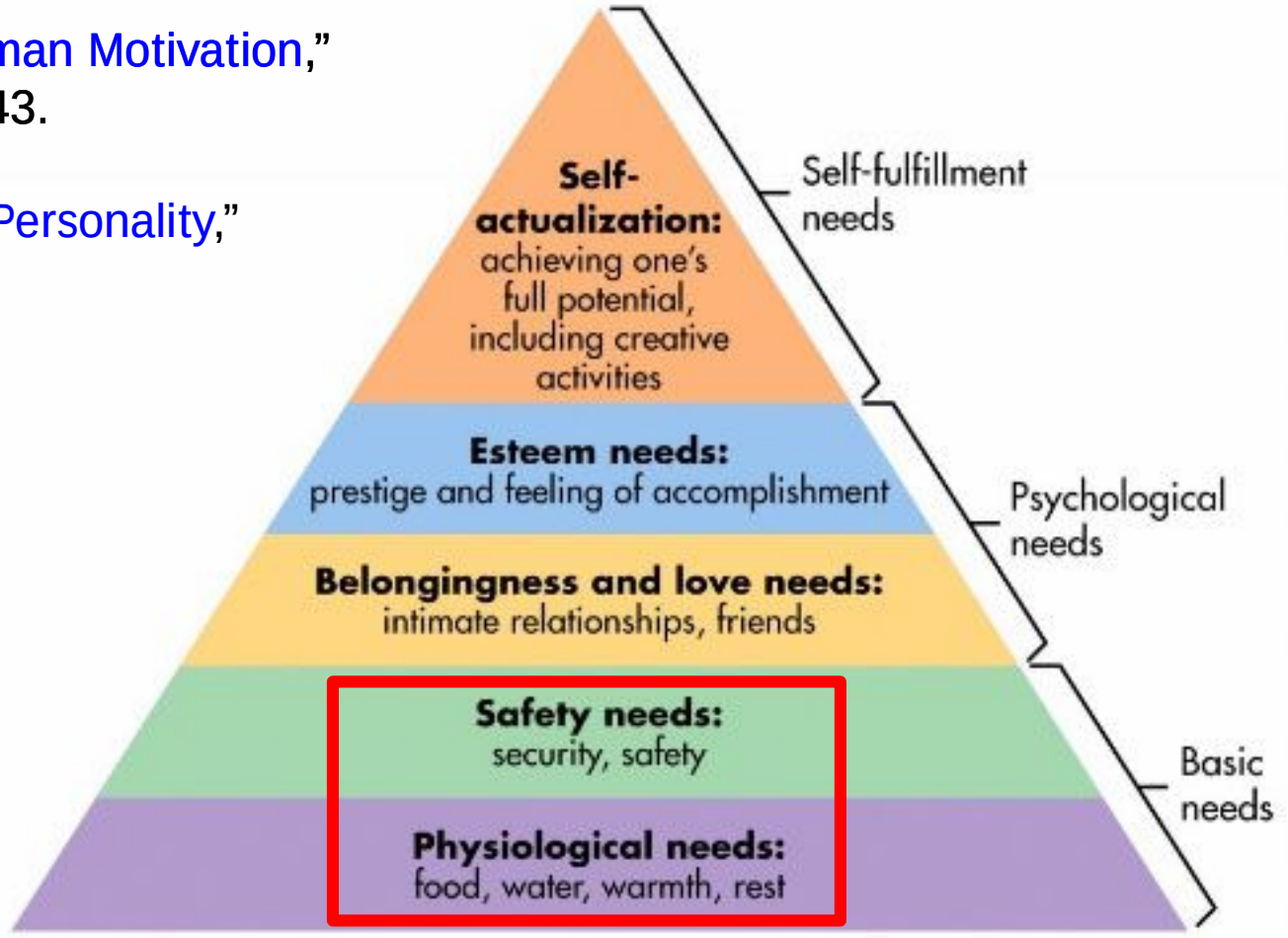
and knowing what is underneath

enables you to **understand** and **solve** problems

Maslow's (Human) Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," Psychological Review, 1943.

Maslow, "Motivation and Personality," Book, 1954-1970.



- We need to start with reliability and security...

Source: https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

Source: By User:Factoryjoe - Mazlow's Hierarchy of Needs.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7964065

How Reliable/Secure/Safe is This Bridge?

Source: http://www.technologystudent.com/struct1/tacom1.png

Collapse of the "Galloping Gertie"

Source: AP
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/tnbhistory/connections/connections3.htm

How Secure Are These People?

Security is about preventing unforeseen consequences

Source: https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/48/09/54/4809543a9c7700246a0cf8acdae27abf.jpg

RowHammer: Retrospective

- New mindset that has enabled a renewed interest in HW security attack research:
  - Real (memory) chips are vulnerable, in a simple and widespread manner → this causes real security problems
  - Hardware reliability → security connection is now mainstream discourse

- Many new RowHammer attacks...
  - Tens of papers in top security venues
  - **More to come** as RowHammer is getting worse (DDR4 & beyond)

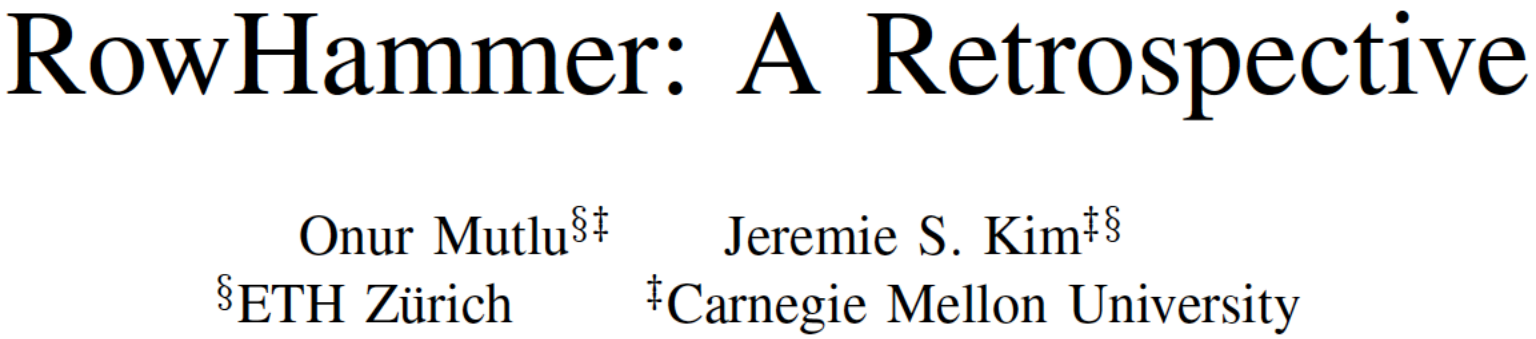
- Many new RowHammer solutions...
  - Apple security release; Memtest86 updated
  - Many solution proposals in top venues (latest in ISCA 2019)
  - Principled system-DRAM co-design (in original RowHammer paper)
  - **More to come...**

Perhaps Most Importantly…

- RowHammer enabled a shift of mindset in mainstream security researchers
  - General-purpose hardware is fallible, in a widespread manner
  - Its problems are exploitable
- This mindset has enabled many systems security researchers to examine hardware in more depth
  - And understand HW's inner workings and vulnerabilities
- It is no coincidence that two of the groups that discovered Meltdown and Spectre heavily worked on RowHammer attacks before
  - **More to come…**

For More on RowHammer…

- Onur Mutlu and Jeremie Kim,
  "RowHammer: A Retrospective"
  IEEE Transactions on Computer-Aided Design of Integrated Circuits and Systems (TCAD) Special Issue on Top Picks in Hardware and Embedded Security, 2019.
  [Preliminary arXiv version]

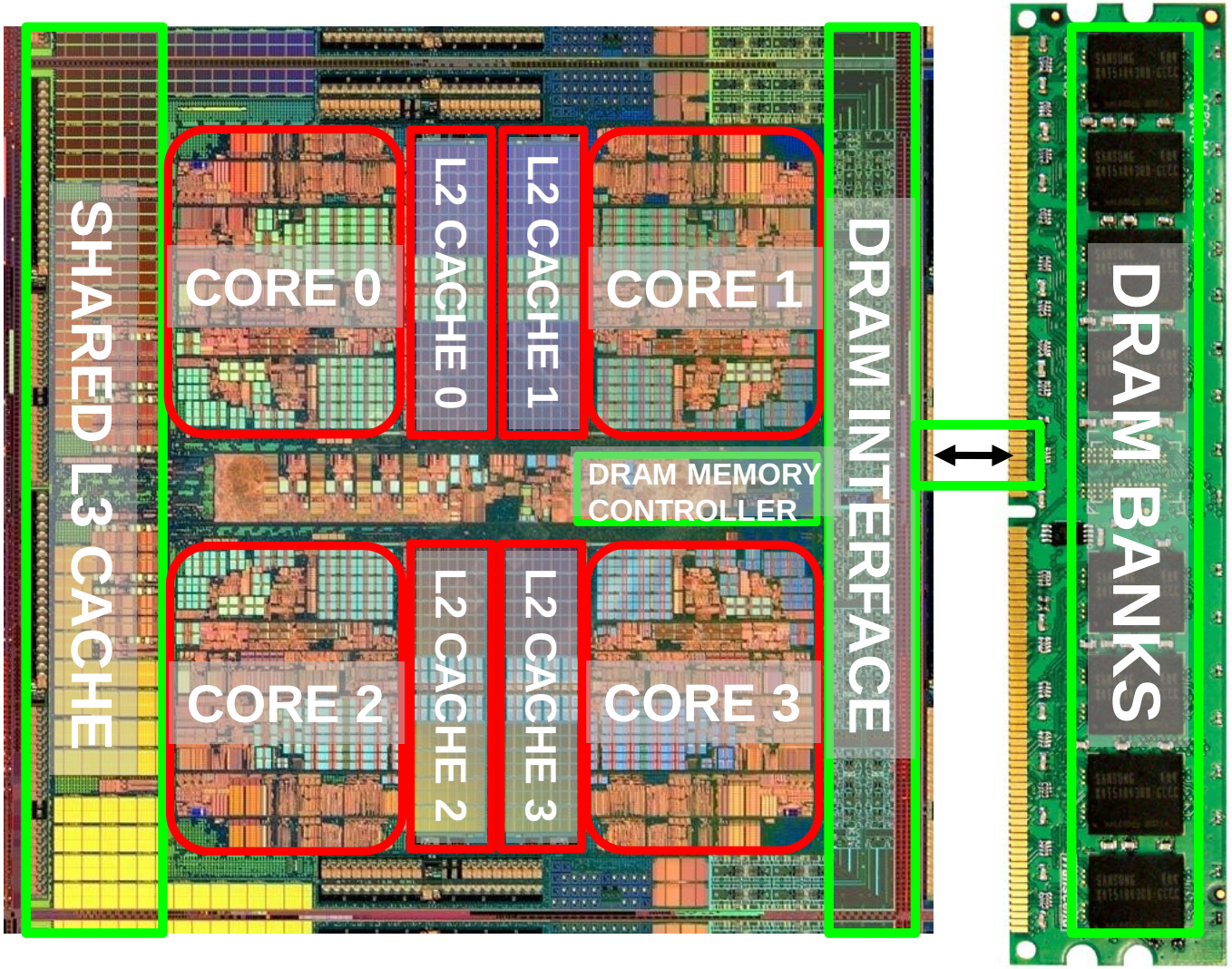

RowHammer: A Retrospective

Onur Mutlu[§‡] Jeremie S. Kim[‡§]
[§]ETH Zürich [‡]Carnegie Mellon University

Mystery #3: Memory Performance Attacks

Multi-Core Systems

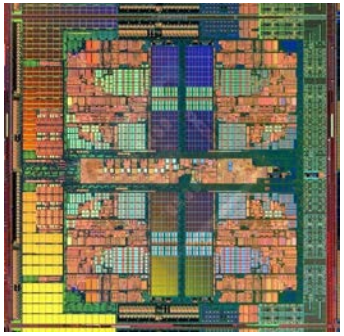
Multi-Core Chip



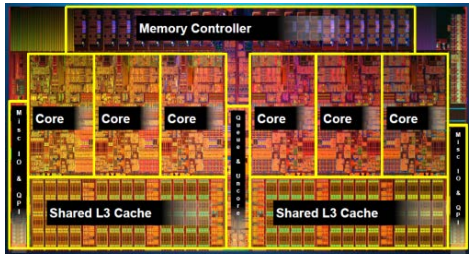
*Die photo credit: AMD Barcelona

A Trend: Many Cores on Chip

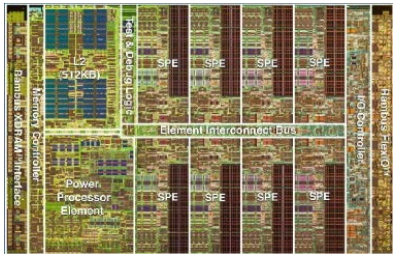
- Simpler and lower power than a single large core
- Parallel processing on single chip → faster, new applications



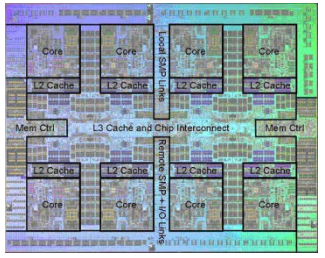
AMD Barcelona
4 cores



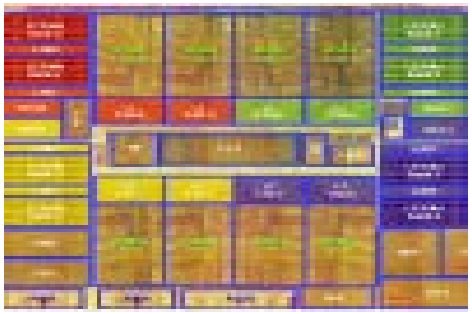
Intel Core i7
8 cores



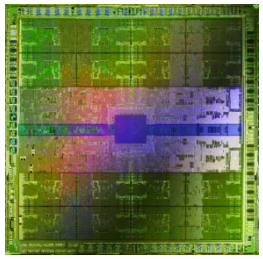
IBM Cell BE
8+1 cores



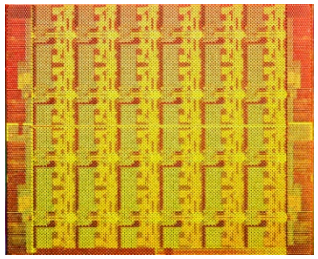
IBM POWER7
8 cores



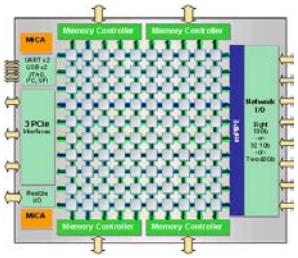
Sun Niagara II
8 cores



Nvidia Fermi
448 "cores"



Intel SCC
48 cores, networked

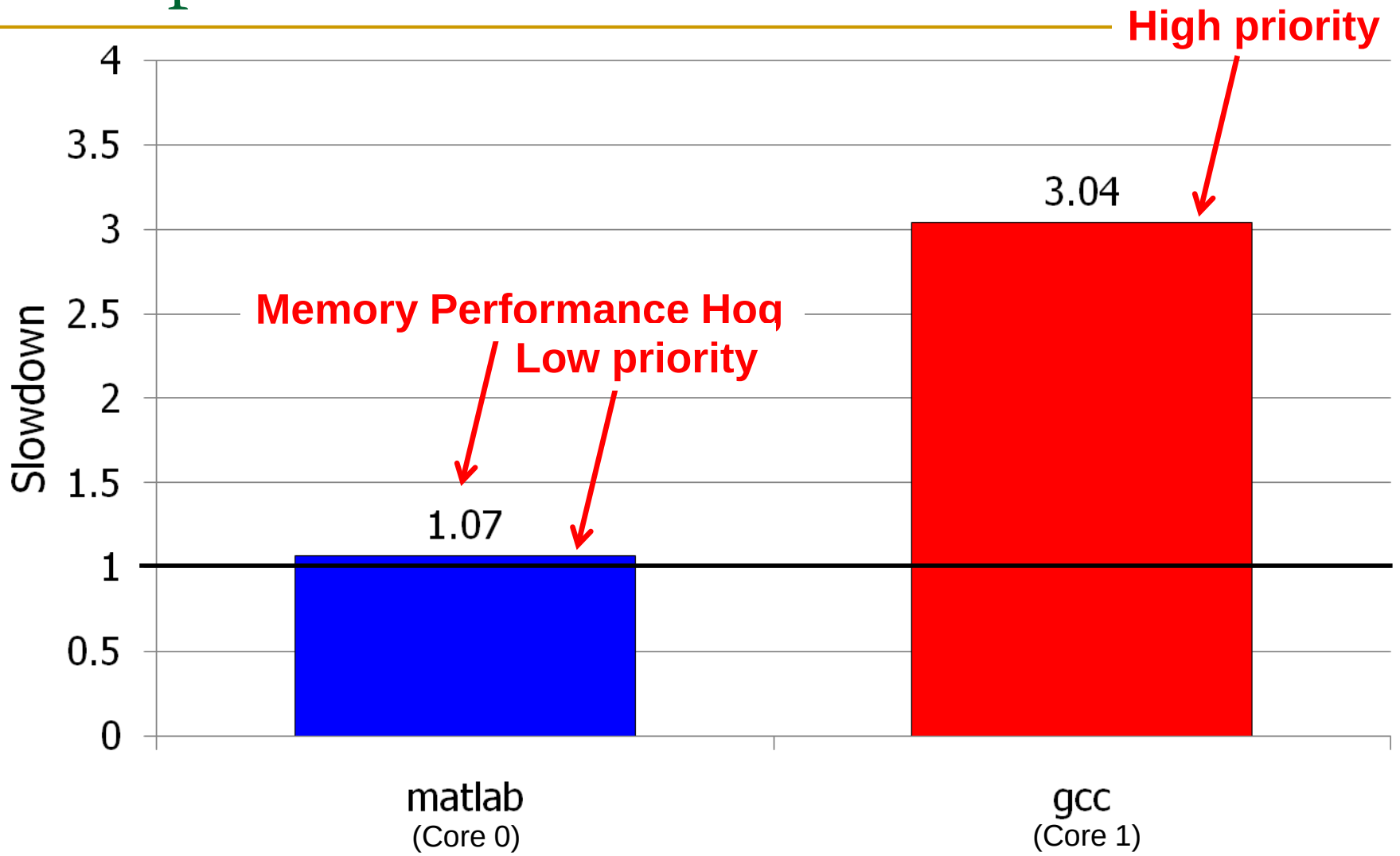


Tilera TILE Gx
100 cores, networked

Many Cores on Chip

- What we want:
  - N times the system performance with N times the cores
- What do we get today?

Unexpected Slowdowns in Multi-Core



Moscibroda and Mutlu, "Memory performance attacks: Denial of memory service in multi-core systems," USENIX Security 2007.

Three Questions

- Can you figure out why the applications slow down if you do not know the underlying system and how it works?
- Can you figure out why there is a disparity in slowdowns if you do not know how the system executes the programs?
- Can you fix the problem without knowing what is happening “underneath”?

Three Questions

- Why is there any slowdown?
- Why is there a disparity in slowdowns?
- How can we solve the problem if we do not want that disparity?
  - What do we want (the system to provide)?

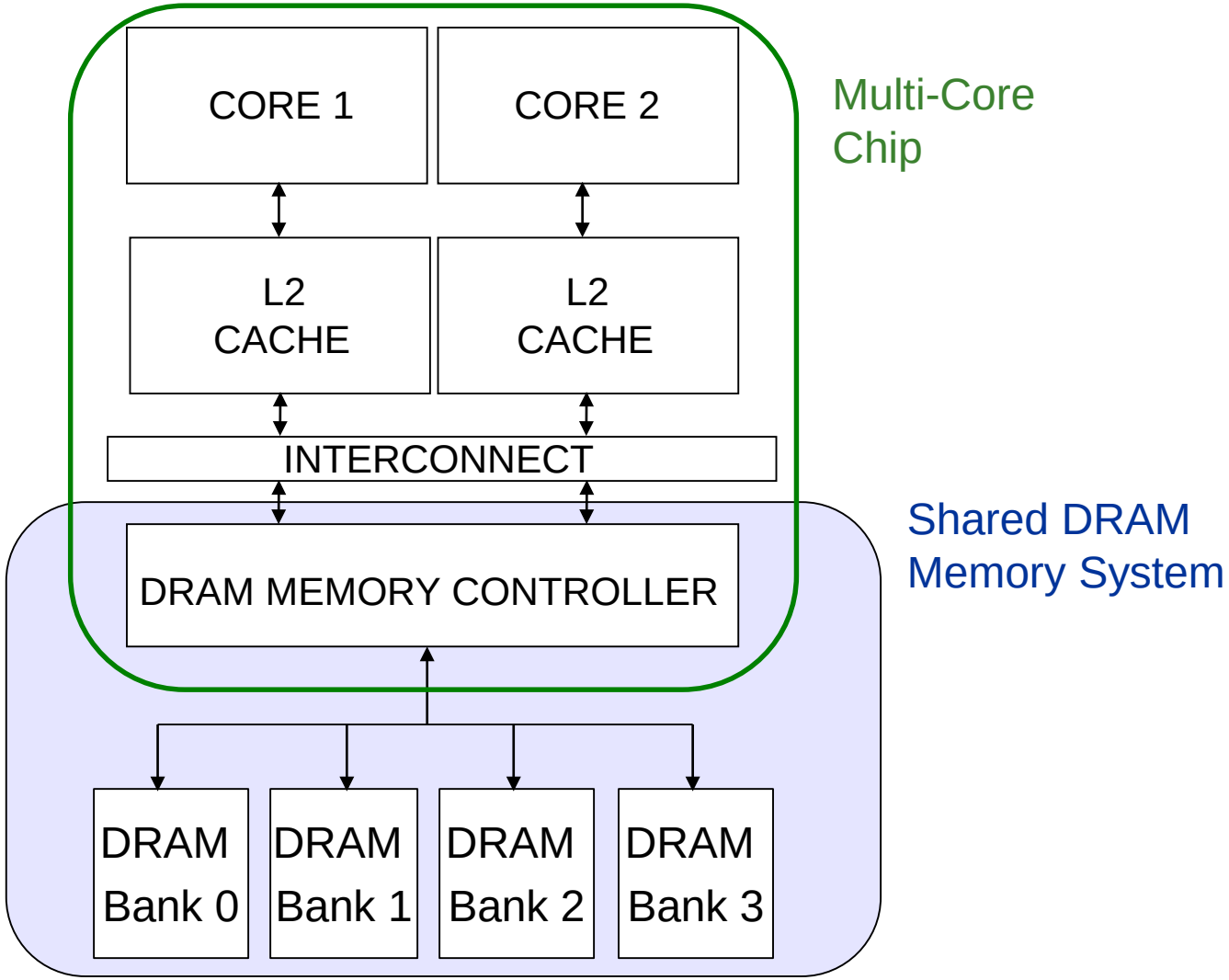
Why Is This Important?

- We want to execute applications in parallel in multi-core systems → consolidate more and more
  - Cloud computing
  - Mobile phones

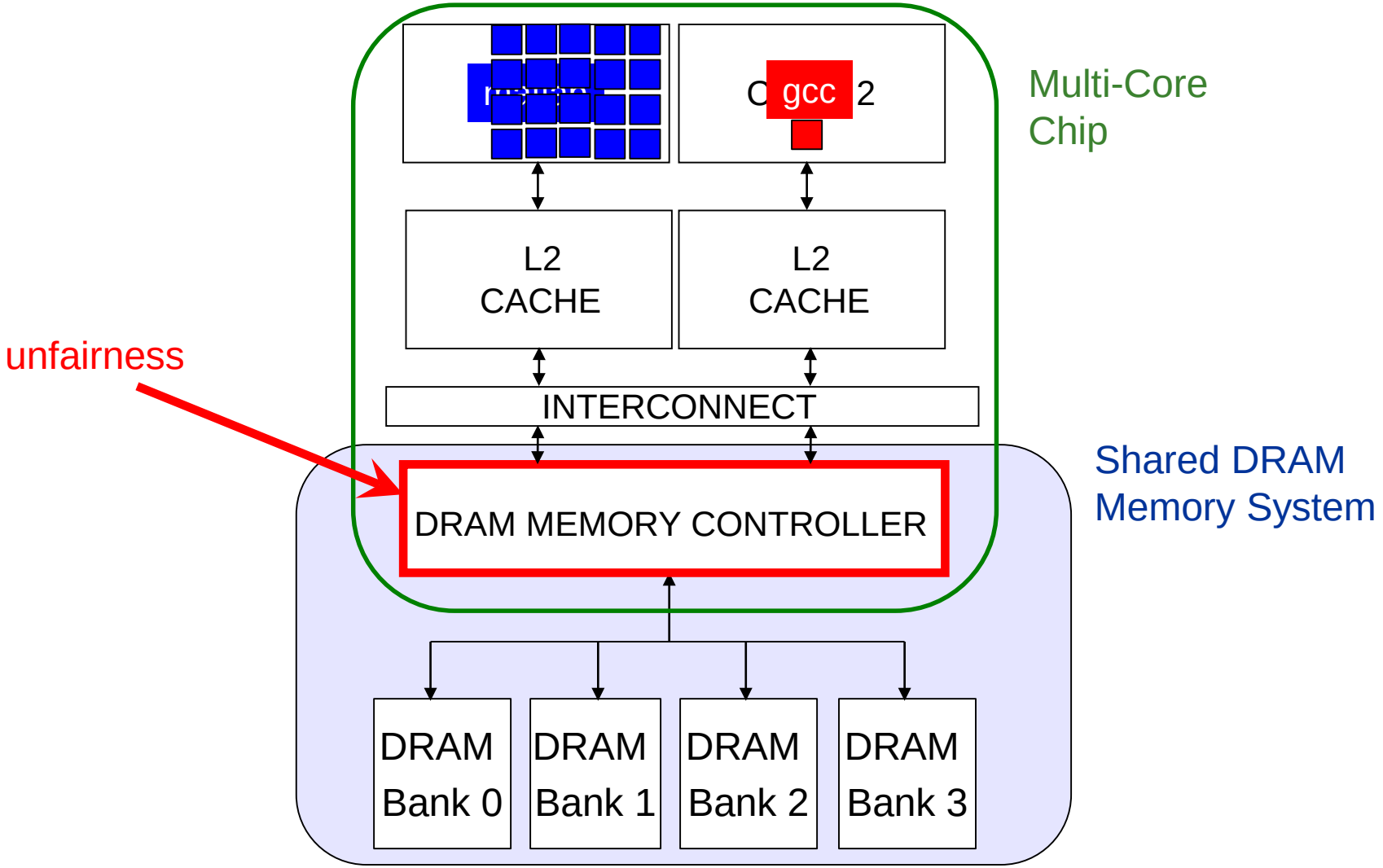
- We want to mix different types of applications together
  - those requiring QoS guarantees (e.g., video, pedestrian detection)
  - those that are important but less so
  - those that are less important

- We want the system to be controllable **and** high performance

Why the Disparity in Slowdowns?

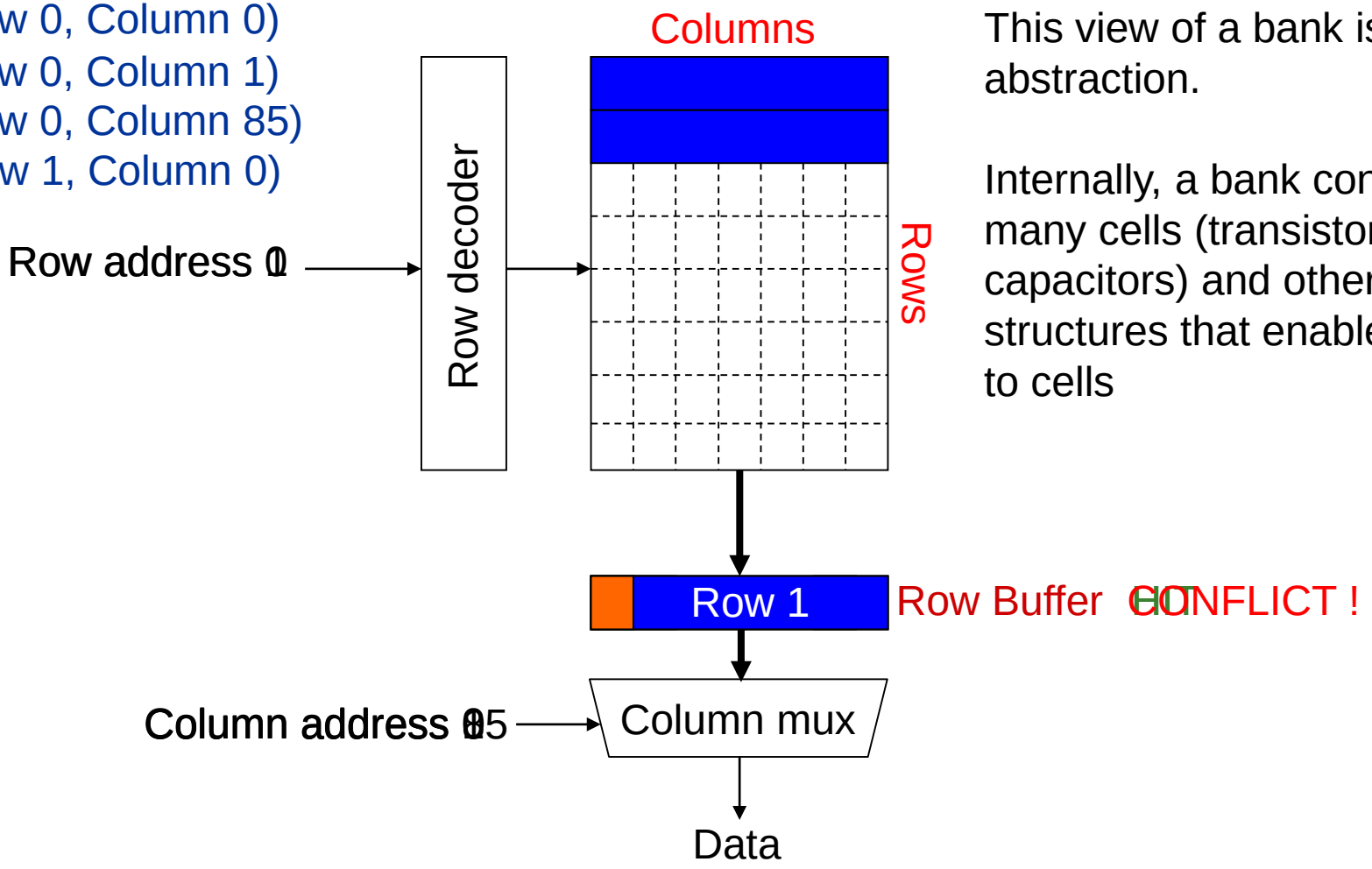


Why the Disparity in Slowdowns?



Digging Deeper: DRAM Bank Operation

Access Address:
(Row 0, Column 0)
(Row 0, Column 1)
(Row 0, Column 85)
(Row 1, Column 0)



This view of a bank is an abstraction.

Internally, a bank consists of many cells (transistors & capacitors) and other structures that enable access to cells

DRAM Controllers

- A row-conflict memory access takes significantly longer than a row-hit access
- Current controllers take advantage of this fact
- Commonly used scheduling policy (FR-FCFS) [Rixner 2000]*
  (1) Row-hit first: Service row-hit memory accesses first
  (2) Oldest-first: Then service older accesses first
- This scheduling policy aims to maximize DRAM throughput

*Rixner et al., "Memory Access Scheduling," ISCA 2000.
*Zuravleff and Robinson, "Controller for a synchronous DRAM …," US Patent 5,630,096, May 1997.

The Problem

- Multiple applications share the DRAM controller
- DRAM controllers designed to maximize DRAM data throughput

- DRAM scheduling policies are unfair to some applications
  - Row-hit first: unfairly prioritizes apps with high row buffer locality
    - Threads that keep on accessing the same row
  - Oldest-first: unfairly prioritizes memory-intensive applications

- DRAM controller vulnerable to denial of service attacks
  - Can write programs to exploit unfairness

A Memory Performance Hog

```
// initialize large arrays A, B

for (j=0; j<N; j++) {
    index = j*linesize;
    A[index] = B[index];
    …
}
```

streaming (in sequence)

```
// initialize large arrays A, B

for (j=0; j<N; j++) {
    index = rand();
    A[index] = B[index];
    …
}
```

random

STREAM

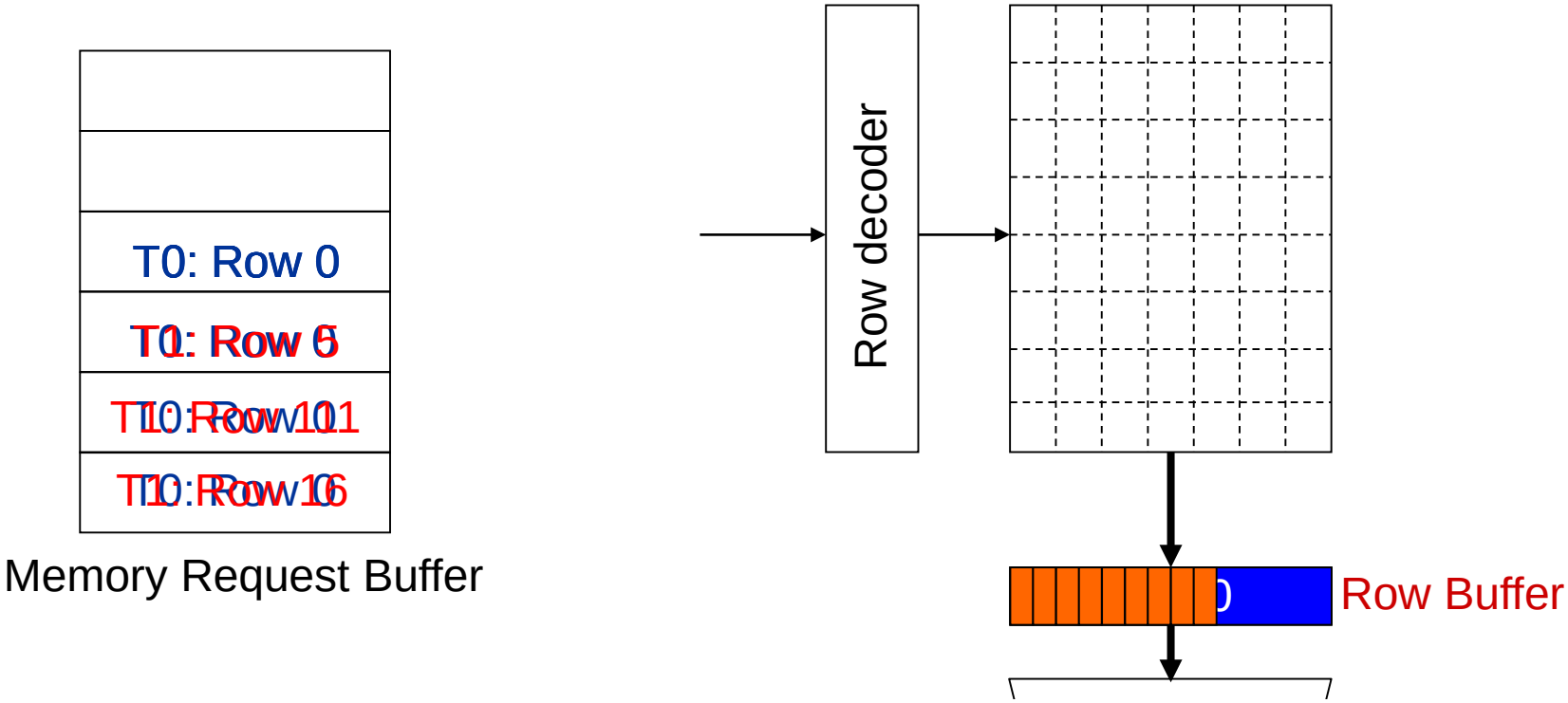
- Sequential memory access
- Very high row buffer locality (96% hit rate)
- Memory intensive

RANDOM

- Random memory access
- Very low row buffer locality (3% hit rate)
- Similarly memory intensive

Moscibroda and Mutlu, "Memory Performance Attacks," USENIX Security 2007.

What Does the Memory Hog Do?



Row size: 8KB, request size: 64B

128 (8KB/64B) requests of STREAM serviced before a single request of RANDOM

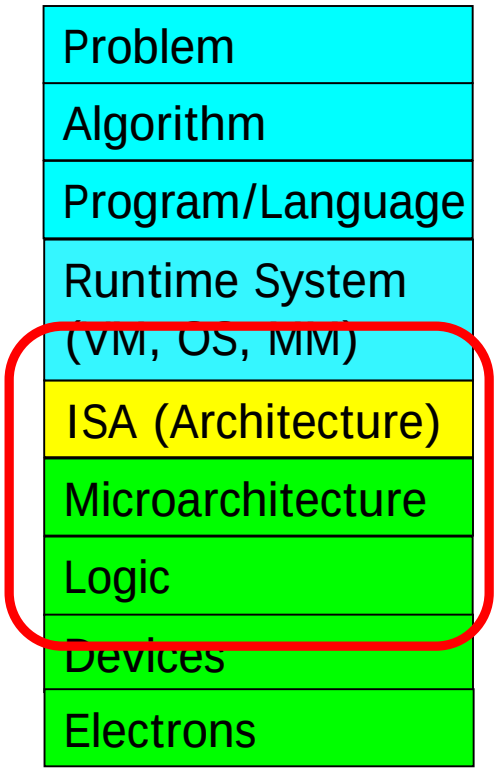
Moscibroda and Mutlu, "Memory Performance Attacks," USENIX Security 2007.

Now That We Know What Happens Underneath

- How would you solve the problem?

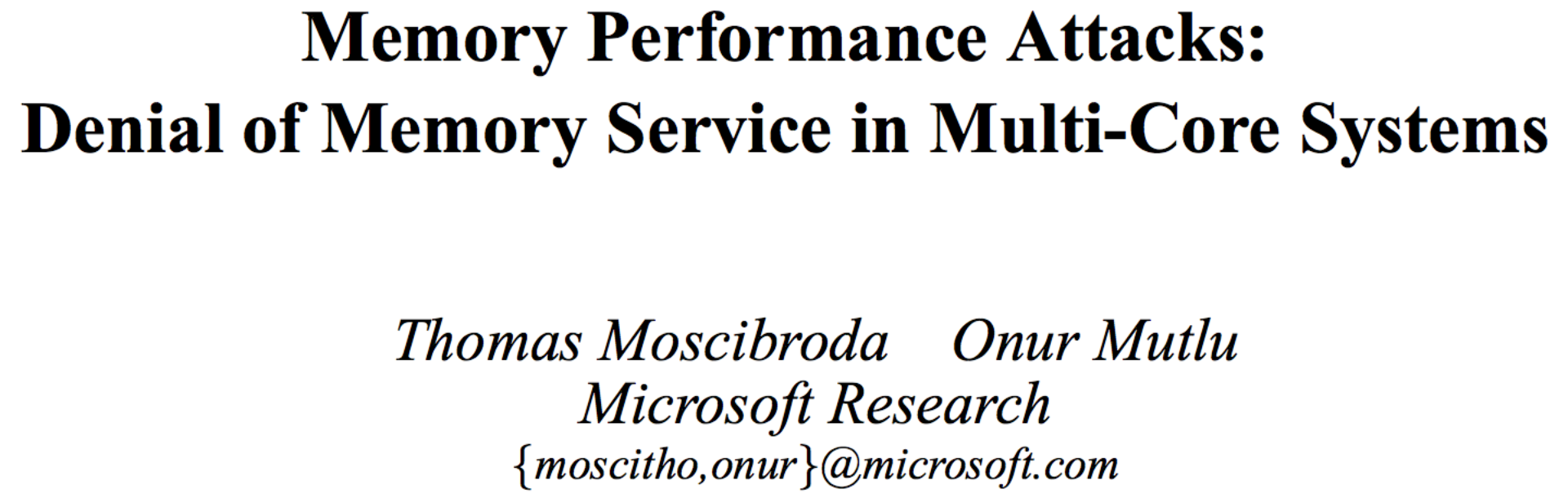
- What is the right place to solve the problem?
  - Programmer?
  - System software?
  - Compiler?
  - Hardware (Memory controller)?
  - Hardware (DRAM)?
  - Circuits?

- Two other goals of this course:
  - Enable you to think critically
  - Enable you to think broadly



For the Really Interested…

- Thomas Moscibroda and Onur Mutlu,
  "Memory Performance Attacks: Denial of Memory Service in Multi-Core Systems"
  Proceedings of the 16th USENIX Security Symposium (USENIX SECURITY), pages 257-274, Boston, MA, August 2007. Slides (ppt)



Really Interested? … Further Readings

- Onur Mutlu and Thomas Moscibroda,
  "Stall-Time Fair Memory Access Scheduling for Chip Multiprocessors"
  Proceedings of the 40th International Symposium on Microarchitecture (MICRO), pages 146-158, Chicago, IL, December 2007. Slides (ppt)

- Onur Mutlu and Thomas Moscibroda,
  "Parallelism-Aware Batch Scheduling: Enhancing both Performance and Fairness of Shared DRAM Systems"
  Proceedings of the 35th International Symposium on Computer Architecture (ISCA) [Slides (ppt)]

- Sai Prashanth Muralidhara, Lavanya Subramanian, Onur Mutlu, Mahmut Kandemir, and Thomas Moscibroda,
  "Reducing Memory Interference in Multicore Systems via Application-Aware Memory Channel Partitioning"
  Proceedings of the 44th International Symposium on Microarchitecture (MICRO), Porto Alegre, Brazil, December 2011. Slides (pptx)

Takeaway

Breaking the abstraction layers (between components and transformation hierarchy levels)

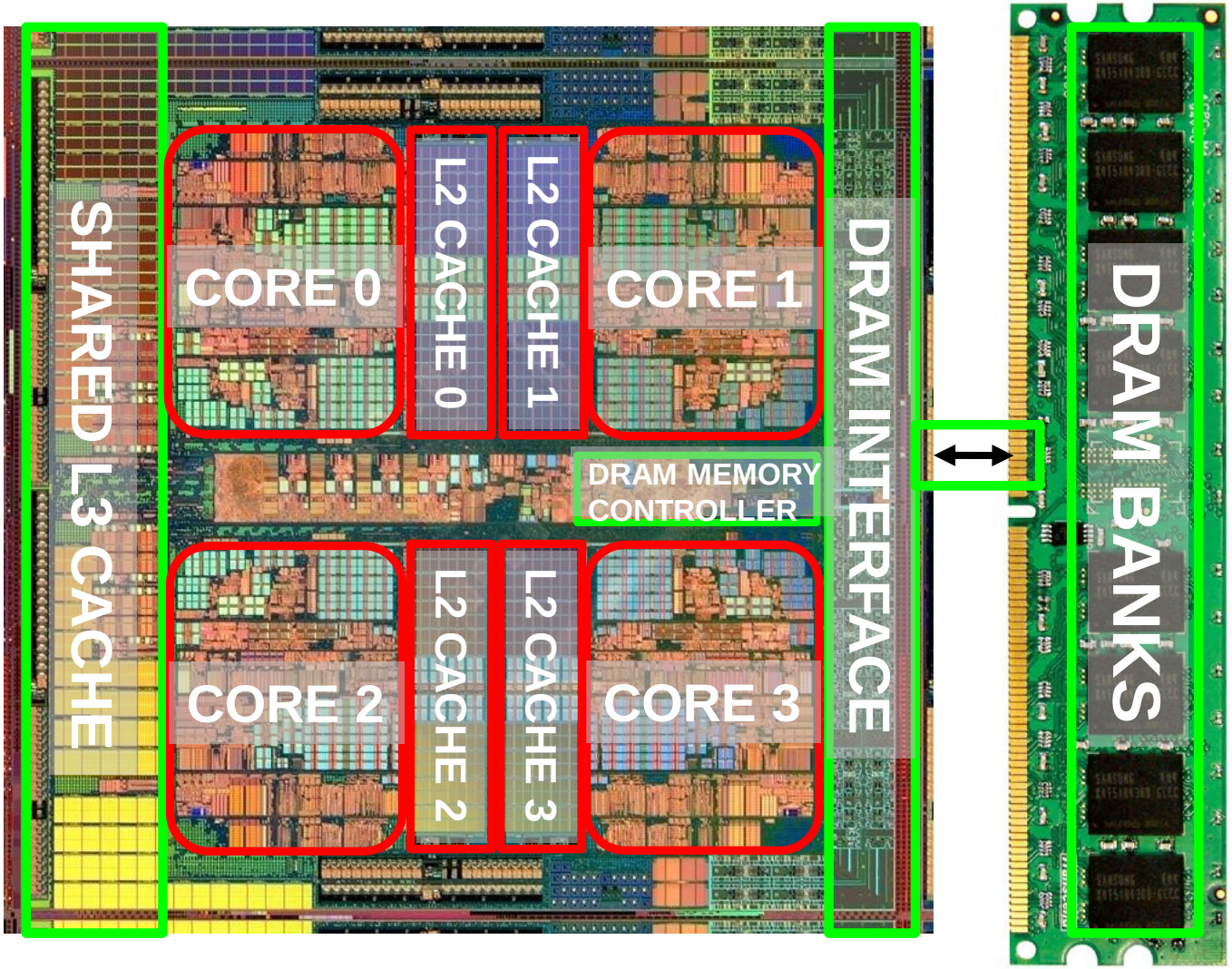
and knowing what is underneath

enables you to **understand** and **solve** problems

Mystery #4: DRAM Refresh

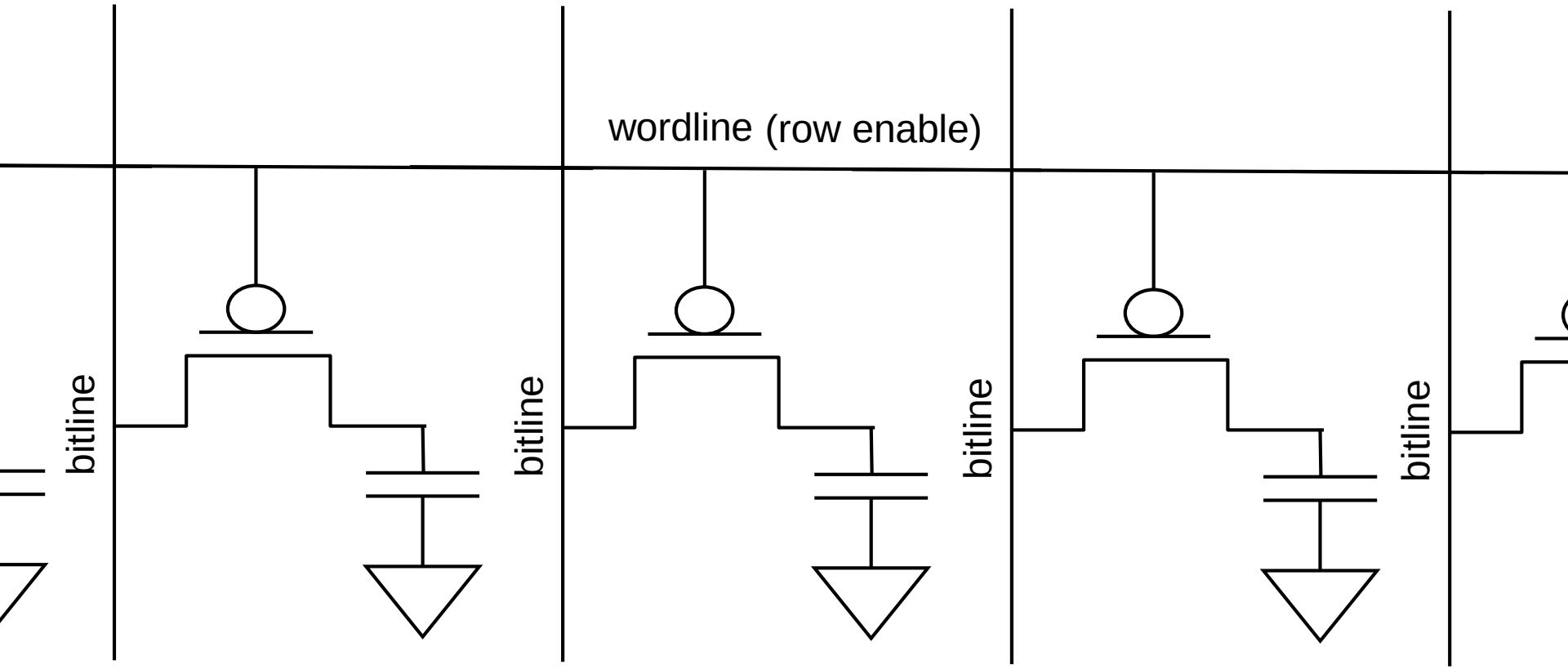
DRAM in the System

Multi-Core Chip



*Die photo credit: AMD Barcelona

A DRAM Cell



- A DRAM cell consists of a capacitor and an access transistor
- It stores data in terms of charge status of the capacitor
- A DRAM chip consists of (10s of 1000s of) rows of such cells

DRAM Refresh

- DRAM capacitor charge leaks over time

- The memory controller needs to refresh each row periodically to restore charge
  - Activate each row every N ms
  - Typical N = 64 ms

- Downsides of refresh

  -- Energy consumption: Each refresh consumes energy

  -- Performance degradation: DRAM rank/bank unavailable while refreshed

  -- QoS/predictability impact: (Long) pause times during refresh

  -- Refresh rate limits DRAM capacity scaling

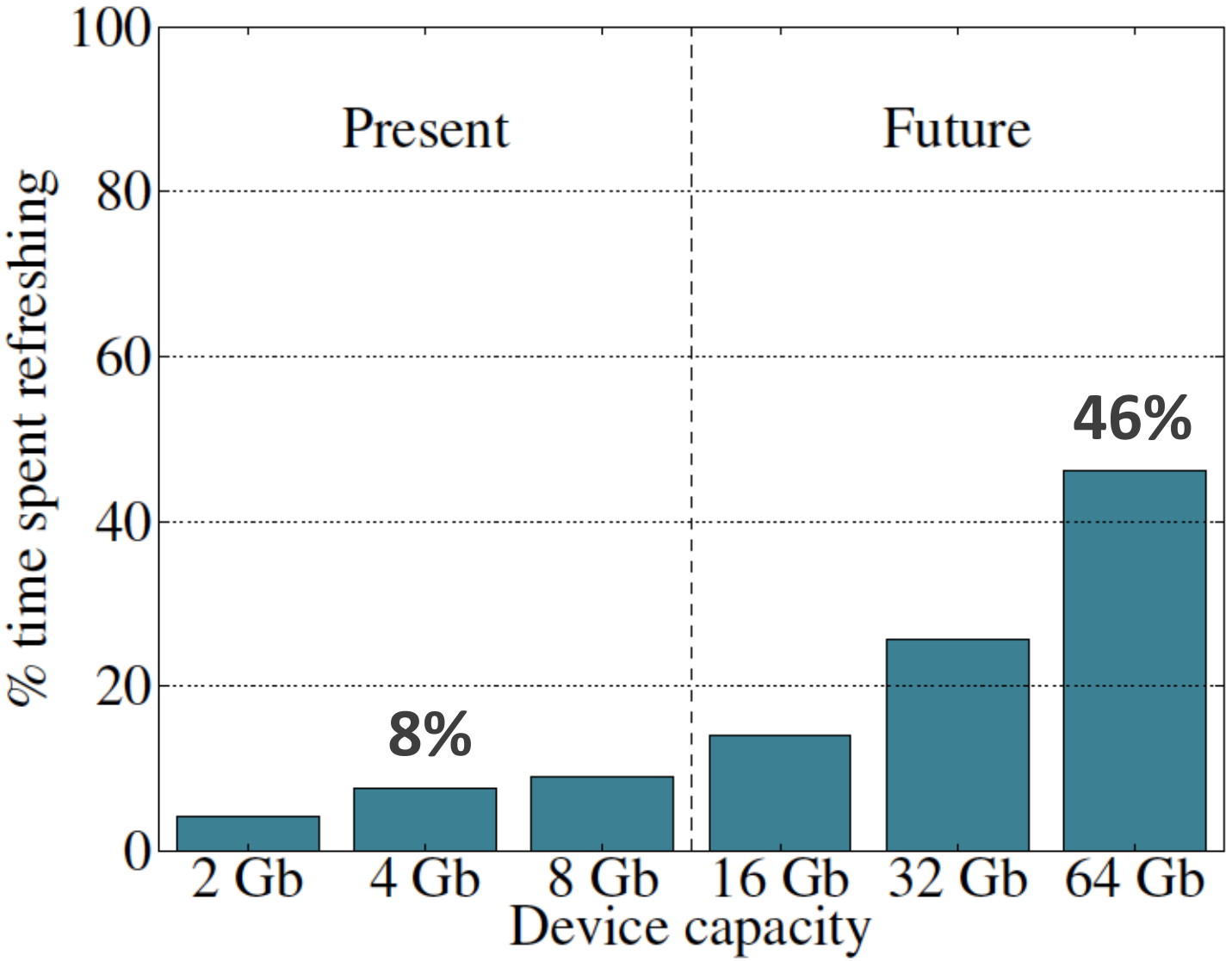
First, Some Analysis

- Imagine a system with 1 ExaByte DRAM (2^60 bytes)
- Assume a row size of 8 KiloBytes (2^13 bytes)

- How many rows are there?
- How many refreshes happen in 64ms?
- What is the total power consumption of DRAM refresh?
- What is the total energy consumption of DRAM refresh during a day?

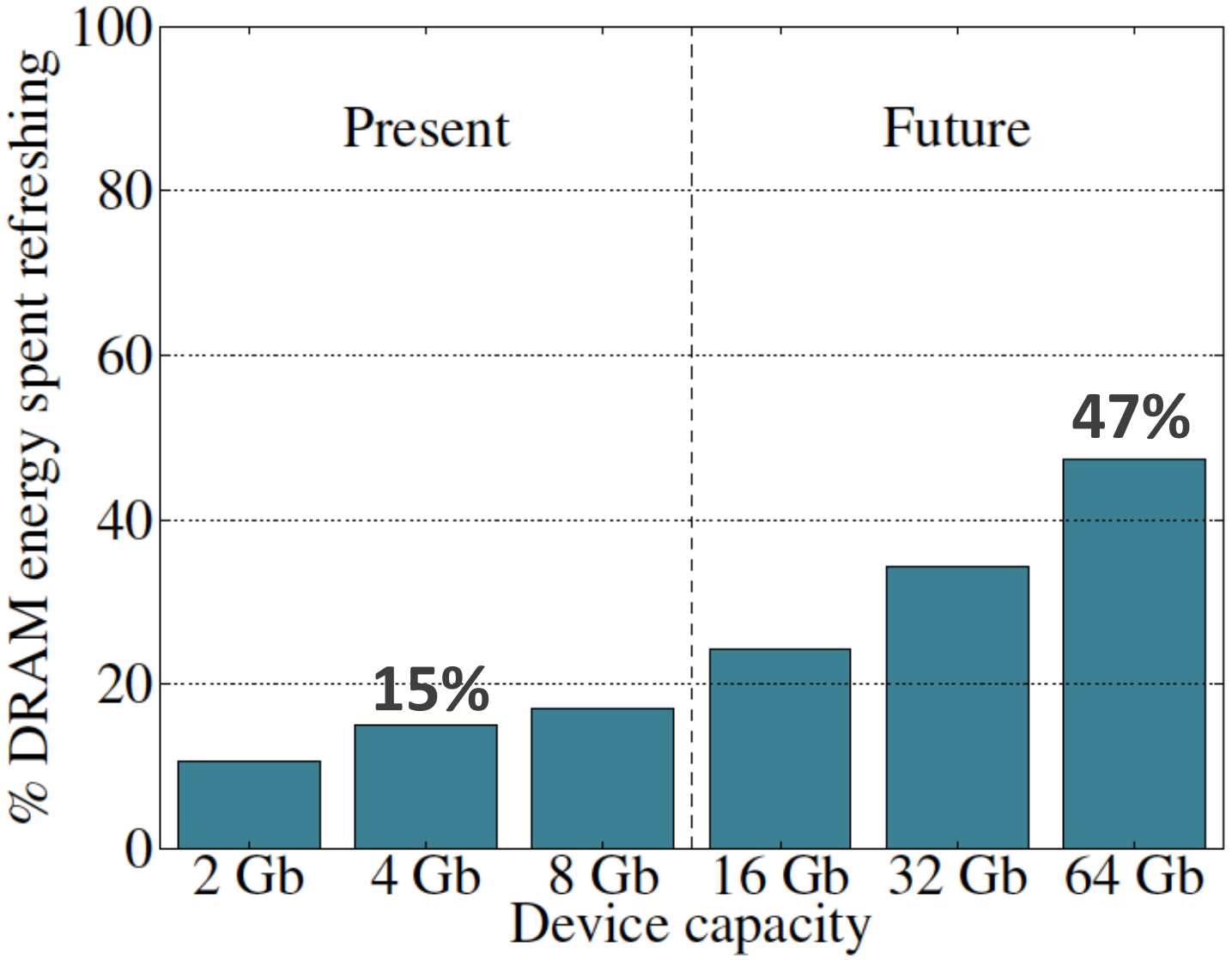
- A good exercise... Optional homework...
- Brownie points from me if you do it...

Refresh Overhead: Performance



Liu et al., "RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh," ISCA 2012.

Refresh Overhead: Energy

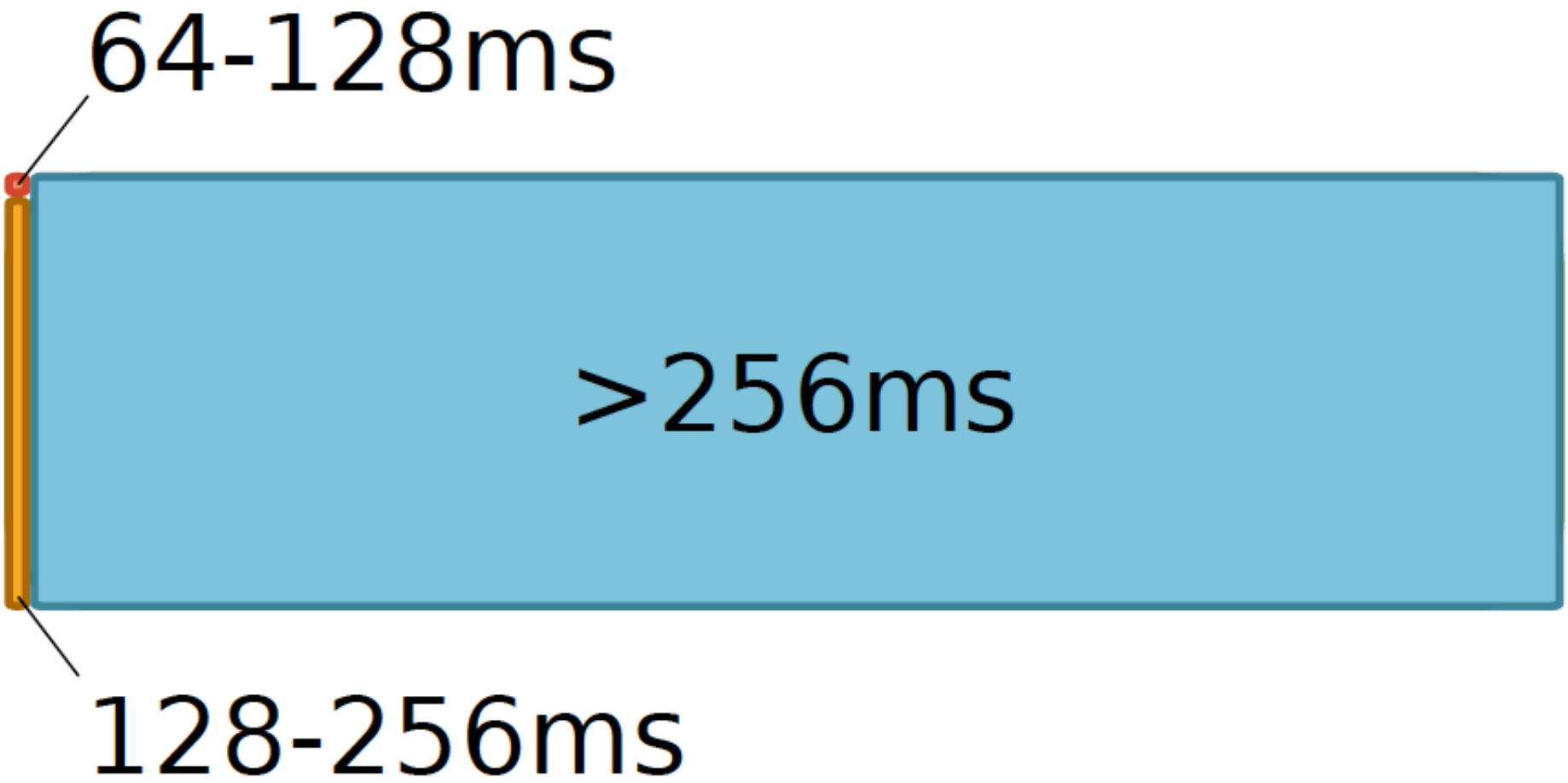


Liu et al., "RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh," ISCA 2012.

How Do We Solve the Problem?

- Observation: All DRAM rows are refreshed every 64ms.
- Critical thinking: Do we need to refresh all rows every 64ms?
- What if we knew what happened underneath and exposed that information to upper layers?

Underneath: Retention Time Profile of DRAM



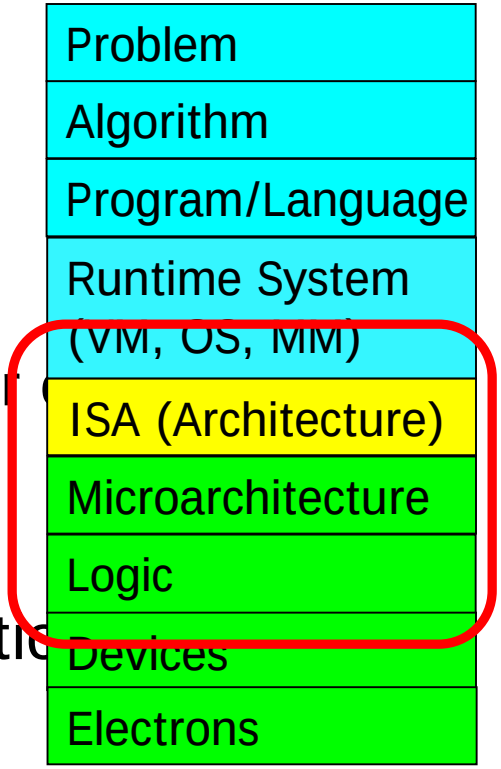
Liu et al., "RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh," ISCA 2012.

Aside: Why Do We Have Such a Profile?

- Answer: Manufacturing is not perfect
- Not all DRAM cells are exactly the same
- Some are more leaky than others
- This is called Manufacturing Process Variation

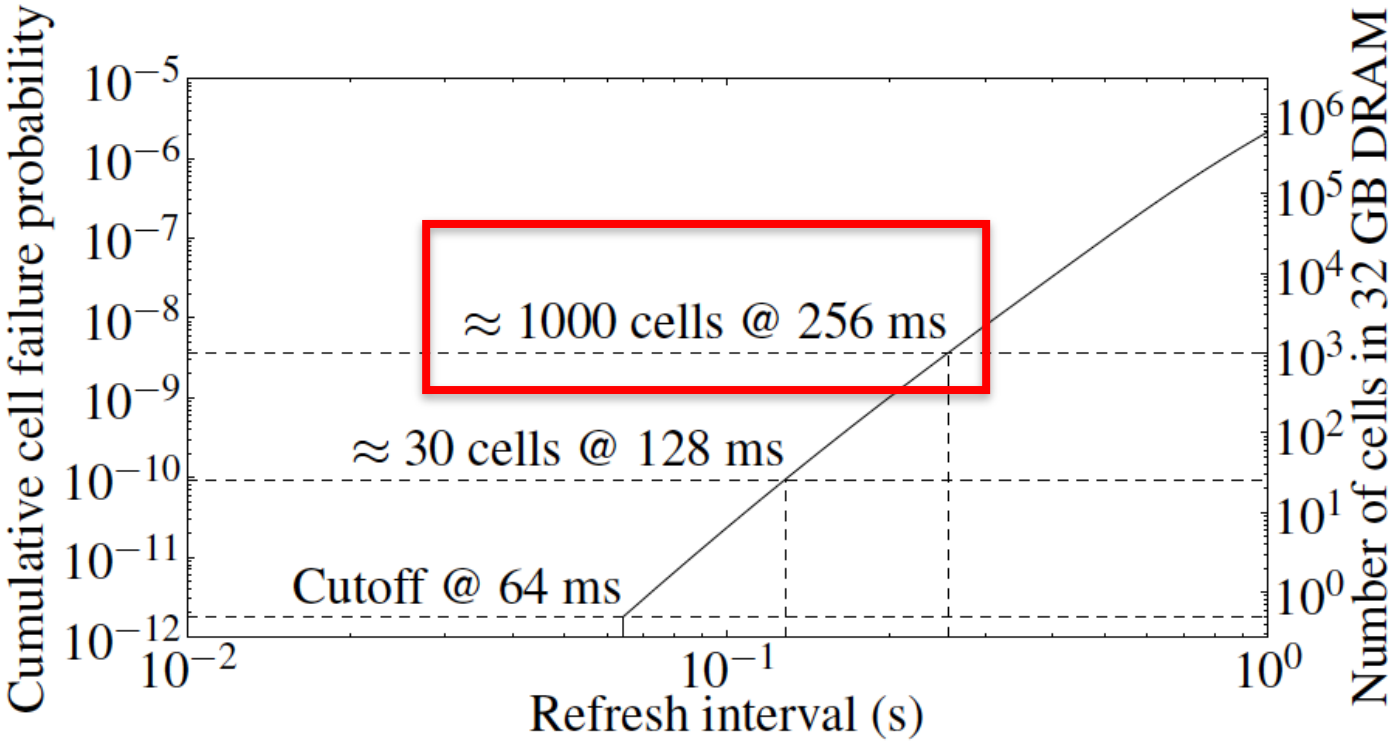
Opportunity: Taking Advantage of This Profile

- Assume we know the retention time of each row exactly
- What can we do with this information?
- Who do we expose this information to?
- How much information do we expose?
  - Affects hardware/software overhead, power
    verification complexity, cost
- How do we determine this profile informati
  - Also, who determines it?



Retention Time of DRAM Rows

- Observation: Overwhelming majority of DRAM rows can be refreshed much less often without losing data



Key Idea of RAIDR: Refresh weak rows more frequently, all other rows less frequently

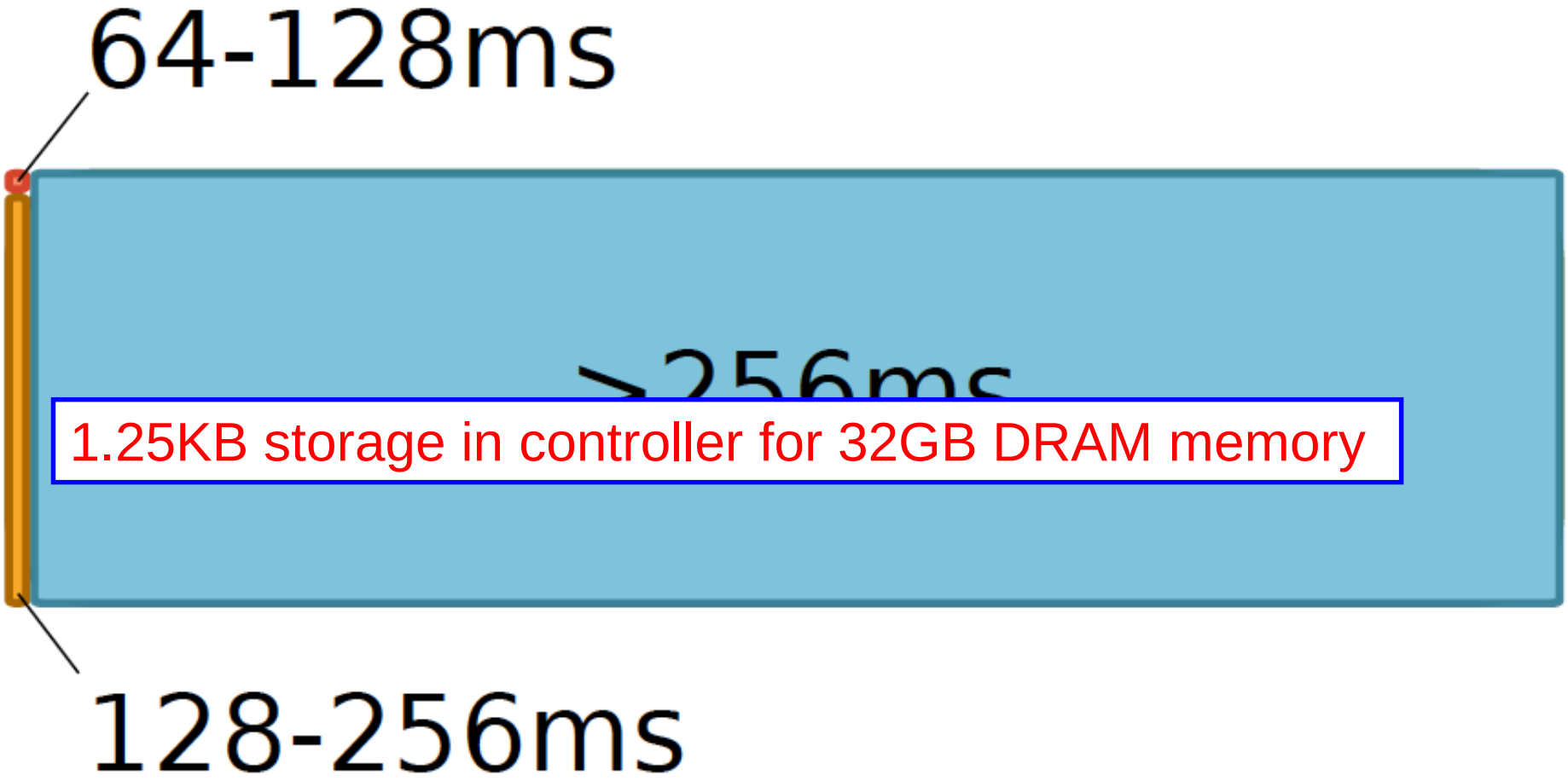
Liu et al., "RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh," ISCA 2012.

RAIDR: Eliminating Unnecessary DRAM Refreshes

Liu, Jaiyen, Veras, Mutlu,
RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh
ISCA 2012.

RAIDR: Mechanism

1. Profiling: Identify the retention time of all DRAM rows

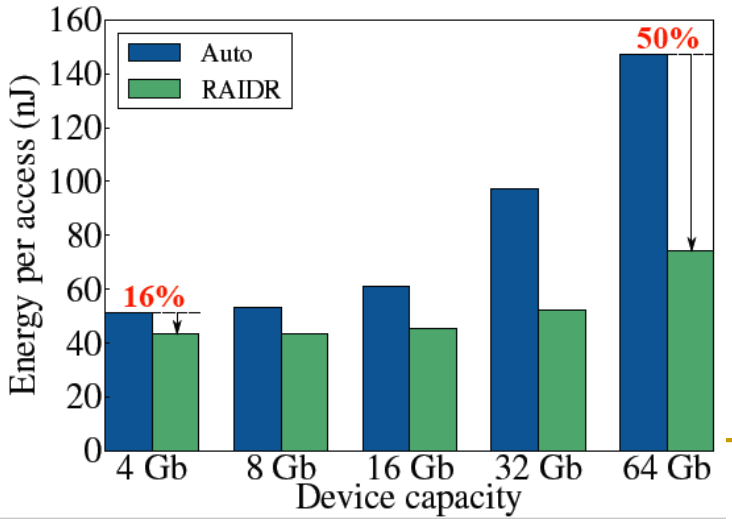


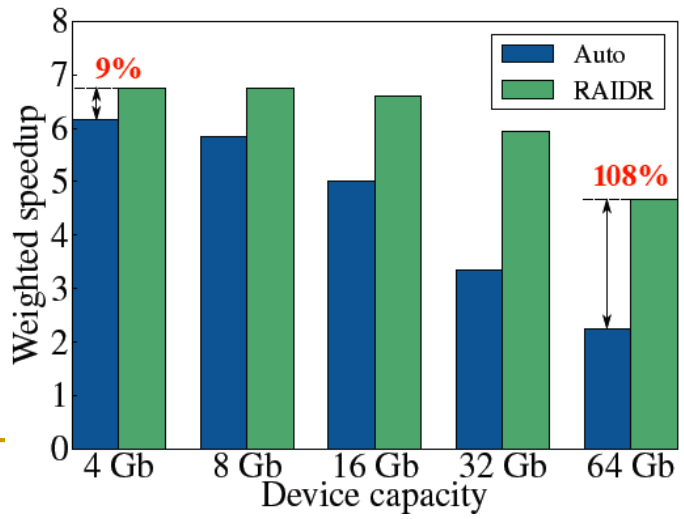
→ check the bins to determine refresh rate of a row

Liu et al., "RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh," ISCA 2012.

RAIDR: Results and Takeaways

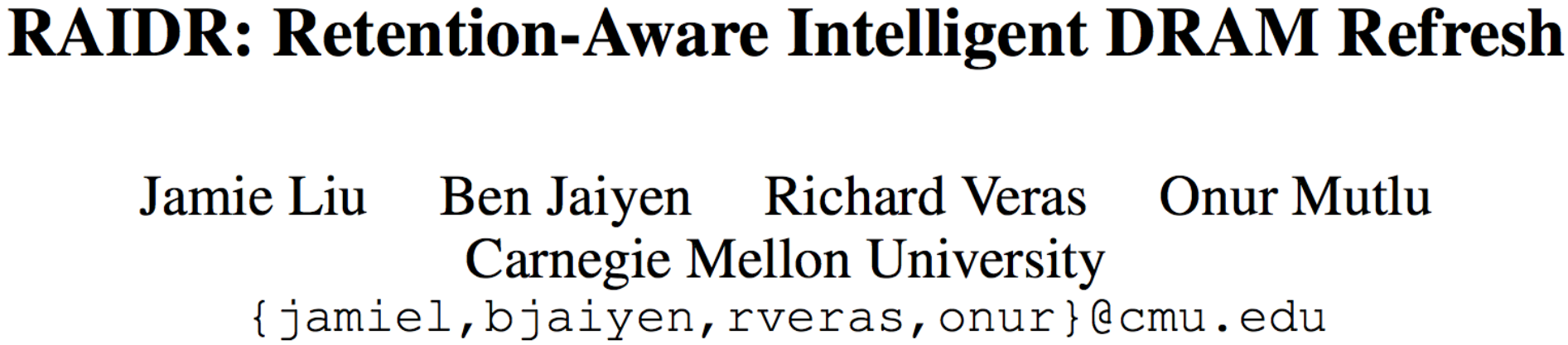
- System: 32GB DRAM, 8-core; Various workloads
- RAIDR hardware cost: 1.25 kB (2 Bloom filters)
- Refresh reduction: 74.6%
- Dynamic DRAM energy reduction: 16%
- Idle DRAM power reduction: 20%
- Performance improvement: 9%
- Benefits increase as DRAM scales in density





Reading for the Really Interested

- Jamie Liu, Ben Jaiyen, Richard Veras, and Onur Mutlu,
  "RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh"
  Proceedings of the 39th International Symposium on Computer Architecture (ISCA), Portland, OR, June 2012. Slides (pdf)



RAIDR: Retention-Aware Intelligent DRAM Refresh

Jamie Liu Ben Jaiyen Richard Veras Onur Mutlu
Carnegie Mellon University
{jamiel,bjaiyen,rveras,onur}@cmu.edu

Really Interested? … Further Readings

- Onur Mutlu,
  "Memory Scaling: A Systems Architecture Perspective"
  Technical talk at MemCon 2013 (MEMCON), Santa Clara, CA, August 2013.
  Slides (pptx) (pdf) Video

- Kevin Chang, Donghyuk Lee, Zeshan Chishti, Alaa Alameldeen, Chris Wilkerson, Yoongu Kim, and Onur Mutlu,
  "Improving DRAM Performance by Parallelizing Refreshes with Accesses"
  Proceedings of the 20th International Symposium on High-Performance Computer Architecture (HPCA), Orlando, FL, February 2014. Slides (pptx) (pdf)

Takeaway I

Breaking the abstraction layers (between components and transformation hierarchy levels)

and knowing what is underneath

enables you to **understand** and **solve** problems

Takeaway II

Cooperation between
multiple components and layers
can enable
more effective
solutions and systems

Recap: Four Mysteries

- Meltdown & Spectre (2017-2018)
- Rowhammer (2012-2014)
- Memory Performance Attacks (2006-2007)
- Memories Forget: Refresh (2011-2012)

Takeaways

Takeaways

- It is an exciting time to be understanding and designing computing architectures
- Many challenging and exciting problems in platform design
  - That no one has tackled (or thought about) before
  - That can have huge impact on the world's future
- Driven by huge hunger for data (Big Data), new applications (ML/AI, graph analytics, genomics), ever-greater realism, ...
  - We can easily collect more data than we can analyze/understand
- Driven by significant difficulties in keeping up with that hunger at the technology layer
  - Five walls: Energy, reliability, complexity, security, scalability

Digital Design & Computer Arch.

Lecture 2b: Mysteries in Comp. Arch.

Prof. Onur Mutlu

ETH Zürich

Spring 2020

21 February 2020

Bloom Filters

Approximate Set Membership

- Suppose you want to quickly find out:
  - whether an element belongs to a set
- And, you can tolerate mistakes of the sort:
  - The element is actually **not** in the set, but you are incorrectly told that it is → false positive
- But, you cannot tolerate mistakes of the sort:
  - The element is actually in the set, but you are incorrectly told that it is **not** → false negative
- Example task: You want to quickly identify all Mobile Phone Model X owners among all possible people in the world
  - Perhaps you want to give them free replacement phones

Example Task

- World population
  - ~8 billion (and growing)
  - 1 bit per person to indicate Model X owner or not
  - 2^33 bits needed to represent the entire set accurately
    - 8 Gigabits → large storage cost, slow access
- Mobile Phone Model X owner population
  - Say 1 million (and growing)
- Can we represent the Model X owner set approximately, using a much smaller number of bits?
  - Record the ID's of owners in a much smaller Bloom Filter

Example Task II

- DRAM row population
  - ~8 billion (and growing)
  - 1 bit per row to indicate Refresh-often or not
  - 2^33 bits needed to represent the entire set accurately
    - 8 Gigabits → large storage cost, slow access
- Refresh-often population
  - Say 1 million
- Can we represent Refresh-often set approximately, using a much smaller number of bits?
  - Record the ID's of Refresh-Often rows in a much smaller Bloom Filter

Bloom Filter

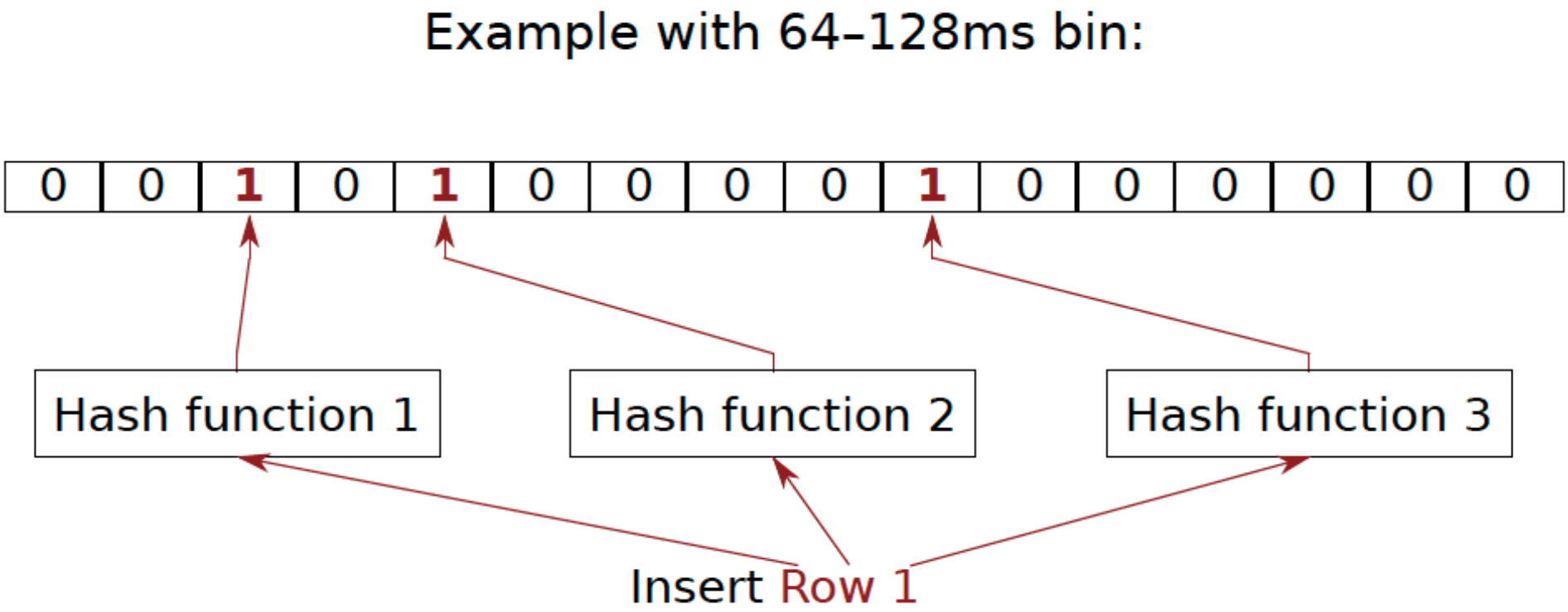
- [Bloom, CACM 1970]
- Probabilistic data structure that compactly represents set membership (presence or absence of element in a set)

- Non-approximate set membership: Use 1 bit per element to indicate absence/presence of each element from an element space of N elements
- Approximate set membership: use a much smaller number of bits and indicate each element's presence/absence with a subset of those bits
  - Some elements map to the bits other elements also map to

- Operations: 1) insert, 2) test, 3) remove all elements

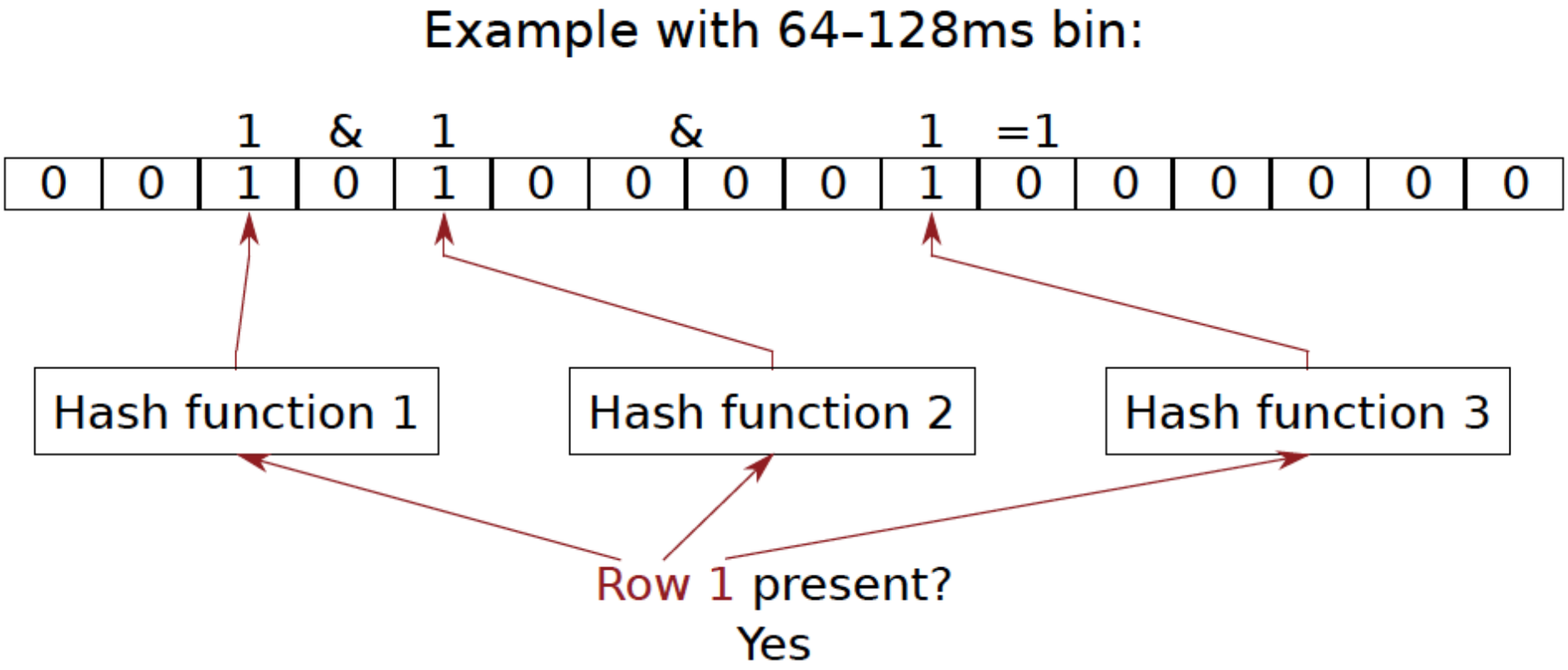
Bloom, "Space/Time Trade-offs in Hash Coding with Allowable Errors", CACM 1970.

Bloom Filter Operation Example

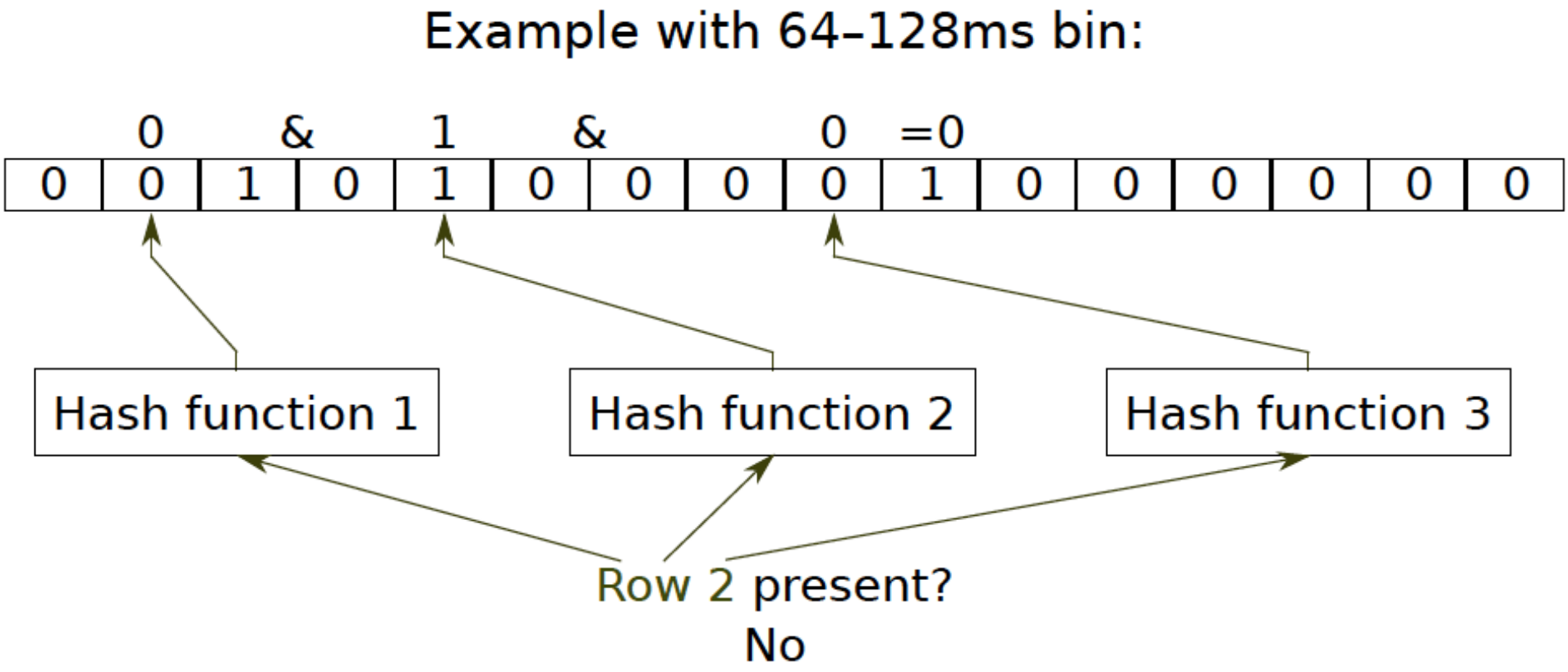


Bloom, "Space/Time Trade-offs in Hash Coding with Allowable Errors", CACM 1970.

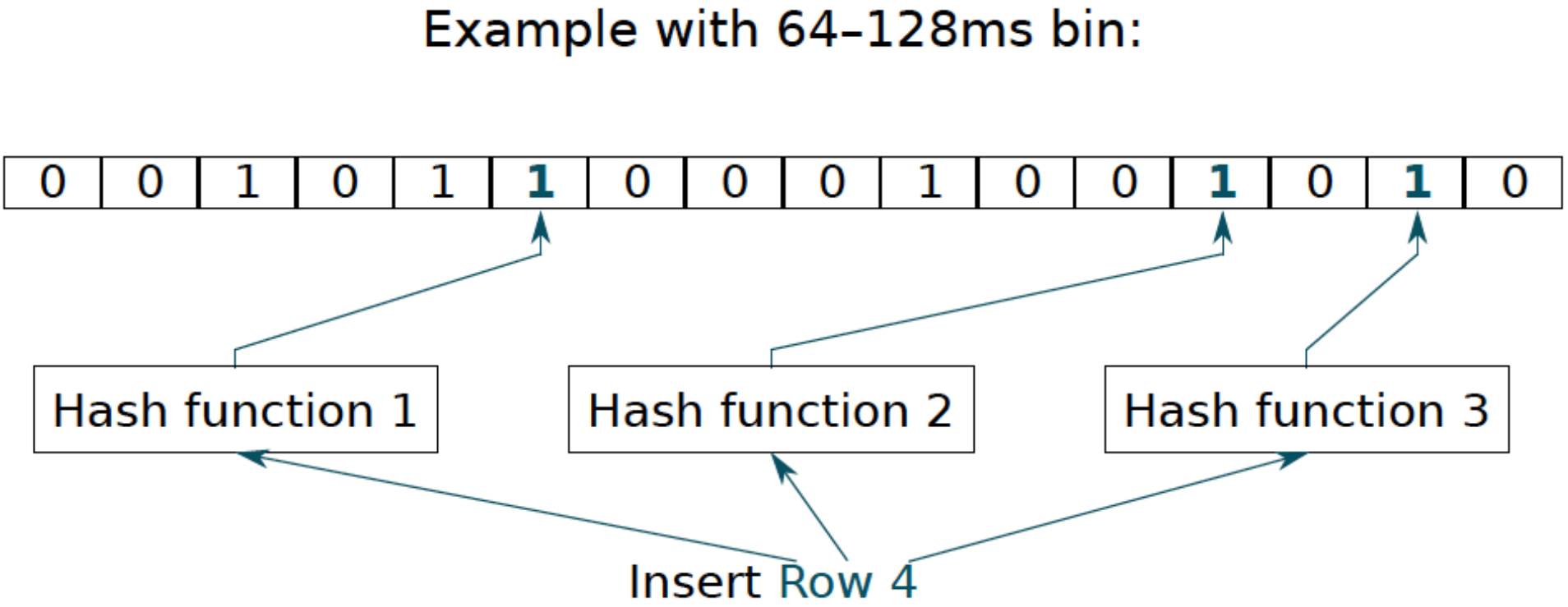
Bloom Filter Operation Example



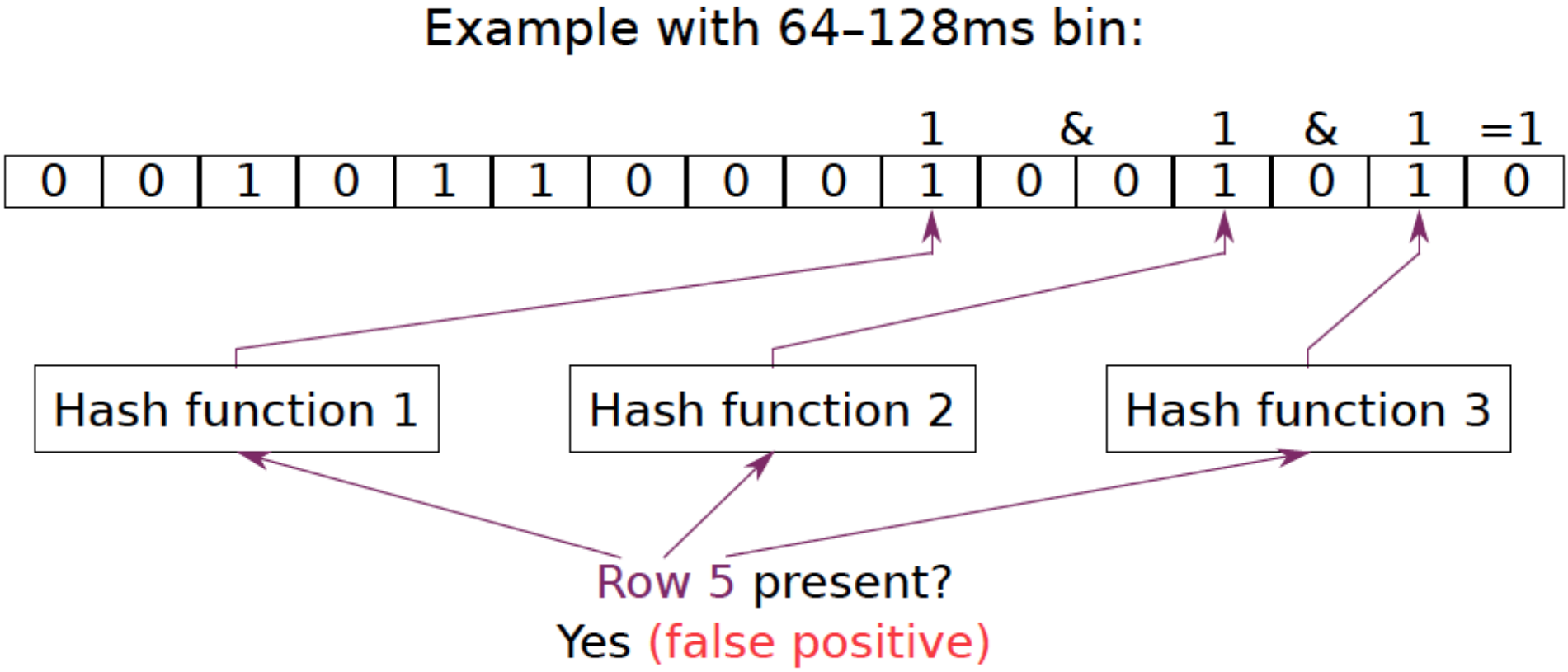
Bloom Filter Operation Example



Bloom Filter Operation Example



Bloom Filter Operation Example



Bloom Filters

Space/Time Trade-offs in Hash Coding with Allowable Errors

In such applications, it is envisaged that overall performance could be improved by using a smaller core resident hash area in conjunction with the new methods and, when necessary, by using some secondary and perhaps time-consuming test to "catch" the small fraction of errors associated with the new methods. An example is discussed which illustrates possible areas of application for the new methods.

BURTON H. BLOOM
Computer Usage Company, Newton Upper Falls, Mass.

In this paper trade-offs among certain computational factors in hash coding are analyzed. The paradigm problem considered is that of testing a series of messages one-by-one for membership in a given set of messages. Two new hash-coding methods are examined and compared with a particular conventional hash-coding method. The computational factors considered are the size of the hash area (space), the time required to identify a message as a nonmember of the given set (reject time), and an allowable error frequency.

Bloom, "Space/Time Trade-offs in Hash Coding with Allowable Errors", CACM 1970.

Bloom Filters: Pros and Cons

- Advantages

  + Enables storage-efficient representation of set membership

  + Insertion and testing for set membership (presence) are fast

  + No false negatives: If Bloom Filter says an element is not present in the set, the element must not have been inserted

  + Enables tradeoffs between time & storage efficiency & false positive rate (via sizing and hashing)

- Disadvantages

  -- False positives: An element may be deemed to be present in the set by the Bloom Filter but it may never have been inserted

  Not the right data structure when you cannot tolerate false positives

Bloom, "Space/Time Trade-offs in Hash Coding with Allowable Errors", CACM 1970.

Benefits of Bloom Filters as Refresh Rate Bins

- False positives: a row may be declared present in the Bloom filter even if it was never inserted
  - Not a problem: Refresh some rows more frequently than needed
- No false negatives: rows are never refreshed less frequently than needed (no correctness problems)
- Scalable: a Bloom filter never overflows (unlike a fixed-size table)
- Efficient: No need to store info on a per-row basis; simple hardware → 1.25 KB for 2 filters for 32 GB DRAM system

Digital Design & Computer Arch.

Lecture 2b: Mysteries in Comp. Arch.

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We Did Not Cover the Following Slides in Lecture 2